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THE MOHAWK CHIEF.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE FALL OF THE NAN SOUNG."

A people whose sad race is done,
Whose tribes did melt away:
As mists that in the morning sun,
Dissolve them in his ray.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London:
T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.
1857.

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PREFACE.

It has frequently been the practice of authors in this part of their work to offer excuses for their undertakings, and to deprecate the wrath of their critics, by laying the *onus* of their act upon friends whose "kind and, perhaps, prejudiced advice they followed." In spite of the numerous precedents that might be quoted of this class, I mean not to adhere to it: I have endeavoured to wile away a few loitering hours, and this is the only information I can give to many of that description of readers who open a volume with the sole curiosity of discovering in the title-page what moral is purposed to

be induced, or what were the causes that led to its publication.

Although thus professing to be independent, I do not enter the vast arena of literary contention without feelings of hesitation; I know the numerous obstacles that await to impede a young author's path. He has rendered himself a mark, at which the weapons of criticism may be discharged from every quarter, whether they be so by just or illiberal hands; and whilst he suffers the reproofs of the former, he must endure—frequently without power of retaliating—all that the ill-nature of the latter suggests. I am far from wishing to escape the strictures of the first, for censure, where merited, confers an obligation by being applied; but I must exclaim to all saints to preserve me from those of the last, who completely overwhelm a feeble reputation by the

sarcastic nature of their remarks; and from those enlightened reviewers who, in a work of three volumes, will discover at what trade the author would have succeeded to admiration.

The tradition which forms the basis of the following narrative is one that is still current among many of the older inhabitants of the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; and the tale is laid at that period when France, viewing our possessions in the Western Hemisphere with a jealous eye, sought to destroy their prosperity by force of arms, and incited against our settlers the savage tribes of the border. Among those whom they enlisted, none were more powerful than the PIQUOTS, a fierce nation inhabiting the Eastern part of New Brunswick, and who continued their hostility until compelled to desist by the desertion of their

allies, and the superior force of their enemies.

During most of our contests with this people, the nations of the Iroquois, whose policy had for a time led them to oppose our adversary, united themselves to us. Their private feelings of animosity, perhaps, having more share in prevailing upon them to take this step than any of affection for ourselves.

The veil that hangs over the movements of the greater bodies of adversaries it is not my design to attempt to raise—my province lies within a smaller compass: and if, when the tale is concluded, the reader has been interested or amused my design is accomplished.

THE

MOHAWK CHIEF.

CHAPTER I.

"High overhead—far as the eye could see,
Stretch'd one broad, wavy, leafy canopy;
And, softly whisp'ring with their thousand leaves,
Lightly convers'd the ancient forest trees.
Still lower down the giant trunk appears,
Whose mighty stem can boast some hundred years;
Whilst at their feet a mossy carpet spread,
On which yon youthful stream hath laid its head.
Boldly had nature in this spot uprear'd
Her dark green banner—None had erst appear'd,
Since on the world had dawn'd the firstborn day,
Save the wild savage to dispute her sway."

THE tale we are about to narrate dates in a year long past by; but its exact period matters not, nor needs to be preserved. It will suffice that the month in which we would commence was one during which the almost vertical sun pours his flood of heat full on the parched and feverish earth; while the scene which we would introduce

lies in one of those vast and gorgeous forests, with which North America abounds. Here if the bewildered traveller should raise his eyes towards the heavens to seek for some token by the which to guide him in his path, his gaze is vain; his sight is obstructed by, and rests upon but one seemingly interminable expanse of waving foliage; betwixt the interstices of which, to any but the most practised eye, though the glimpses obtained of the deep blue vault of day, or of the sparkling one of night, are frequent, yet are they useless. One single star cannot direct him, nor does the other appear to his confused eyes of a lighter or deeper shade, but overspread with the same unchanging hue. He knows not whether he looks towards the cold and ice-bound North, or if his onward course would lead him to the warm and spicy South, or tend toward the chamber of the Sun, or to the quarter where that luminary sinks into Ocean's bosom. Lower, as we have observed in our heading, appear the immense trunks, whose wrinkled and decaying stems show the traces of a long lapse of years, each of which

seems to have spent its period of youth, and to have exhausted itself in a vain attempt to o'ertop its fellows, and alone to have put forth its branches when it could rise no longer.

Here and there, as if to cast a freshness upon the scene, and mix up youth with age, bubbles forth some rivulet or brook, which dances forward in its course, betraying all the changeful fancies of a child; now fretfully it gurgles over its stony bed; now moodily and sulkily it glides between its banks of painted green; now fiercely, franticly, and passionately it hurries forward; and now its motion scarce perceptible, it seems to rest calmly as a sleeping babe; thus proceeds it onward till joined by other waters, that streamlet, which a pebble might once have diverted, has swollen into a mighty river, on whose bosom Ceres and world-governing Plutus calm recline.

In the depths of one of these forests, and on the margin of one of these crystal streams, are seated certain individuals with whom we will proceed at once to make the reader acquainted. They are five in number, two from their appear-

ance and dress are evidently English; while the remaining three belong to the aborigines; to that race, who having first received with all the warmth of hospitality the strangers upon their soil, were rewarded by the latter for their unguarded confidence and generosity by having their nations extirpated, their altars and their homes profaned, their graves upturned, and the bones of their fathers trodden under foot. How far the proceedings of the white man, towards his former host, and original possessor of the land and fields which he inhabits, are consonant with the laws of humanity and justice it is not in our province to consider. Sophistry furnishes readily its reasons to gild the actions of superior strength and power; nor do men fail to find many convincing arguments to back and support them in their interested pursuits.

The elder of the two whites seemed to have passed somewhere about sixty summers. He was tall and erect, his countenance was of a stern, but not of a repulsive character, bearing the marks of having undergone the deep suffer-

ings of grief—of being furrowed by the hand of sorrow, and not by that of time. His whole demeanour was that of a man accustomed to the tented field, and a large wound upon his brow showed that when danger was near he flinched not from his task. He was habited in an undress military coat, and skin cap; in his belt were a brace of pistols, a sword hung at his side, and a large rifle was placed within reach of his hands.

The companion of the above was a young man in the hey-day of youth; yet from his free and unconstrained movements it was evident that the paucity of his years had not hindered Dame Nature from allotting to him a full share of muscle and sinew. His countenance was open and bold even to recklessness; but this latter expression seemed rather to arise from the effects of a border education, than from assumption on his part. A coat of coarse cloth, something after the fashion of a surtout, reached down to his knees, and a pair of stout leathern gaiters defended his legs from the thorns; at his girdle

was suspended the sheath of his knife, a weapon equally serviceable for the chase and the more dangerous intents of war; beside him lay his rifle, a trusty friend that but seldom failed him, and in his dexterity to draw from and avail himself of its best qualities, he greatly prided himself.

The natives, who we have observed, formed the larger portion of the party, were known, from their weapons and paint, to be of the tribe of the Mohawks, one of the nations of the Iroquois. The figures described upon the parts of their bodies which were exposed, together with the red paint plentifully smeared upon their cheeks and arms, declared theirs to be no errand of peace. From the respect paid to one, who was the leader, he would appear to be a chief of no mean rank and authority, and who was also a fine specimen of the Indian half-bred. His eyes were of a dark hazel, his nose possessed not that characteristic flatness which belongs to the full-blooded savage of America: but stood forth prominent and well defined. His mouth was expressive of firmness

and resolution, his complexion was a far lighter shade than is usual with his race; his carriage was proud and graceful; his strength it was easy to perceive was great, yet his limbs, and broad chest, save when he moved betrayed not their power, and whilst their possessor rested, each seemed as smooth and as rounded as a statue fresh from some master sculptor's hands; thrown over his shoulders was a small blanket, worn apparently, more on account of its lively colours, than any necessity for it as an article of covering; round his loins was bound a piece of deep blue cloth: in a wampum belt were placed his tomahawk and knife sheath; on his feet were a pair of handsomely embroidered mocassins, whilst his head was bare, with the exception of a tuft left to aid a victorious enemy to take his scalp. Above the scalp-lock nodded a plume of feathers; a short heavy rifle rested upon his knees, which fatal at a distance would be equally so in the hands of its present owner if wielded as a club, and it would have been as dangerous to encounter its sweep as to have been presented as its target.

It will be useless to occupy ourselves with the remainder of the party; they were Indians, as they have been described a hundred times before, fierce, subtle, and eager to encounter their foes. They were perfectly naked with the exception of a coloured cloth around their loins and mocassins to their feet. They were armed with tomahawk, knife, and rifle, and their scalp-locks were decorated by tufts of feathers.

We have now presented the scene to our reader's view, and having for that purpose, devoted a considerable space, it is but fair we also describe the occupation of the individuals we have introduced, but the smoking haunch, and the zest with which it is attacked, plainly declare that the travellers, having had their appetites excited by forest air and exercise, are now, though it is thus late in the day, breaking their fast, and satisfying their cravings.

Neither addressed his comrade, so intent were they upon, and convinced of the necessity of, taking advantage of the present opportunity, and laying in a sufficient store to meet the long

period which might ensue before another meal would present itself.

At last the younger of the two Englishmen, wiping his mouth upon his hand, and washing down his breakfast and dinner with water taken in his palms, addressed himself to the elder.

"Well, Major, I'm sure we ought to be much obliged to those precious imps for this: for if some of their blundering blockheads hadn't just given this fellow a touch, we should have had to dine off air and hope, and that's more than I ever like for my dinner; you see it's such poor eating, and such a little to be got out of it to keep one up after a hard day's tramping in the woods."

"Such appears, Frank, to be your opinion," replied the other, "and such I have been thinking for a considerable time past: you do not seem to place much reliance upon your enemy's providing you again so handsomely or so plentifully; but I think that we have done sufficient honor to the gift, and ought, without further delay, to continue our pursuit of the unintentional donor."

"Why, Major, you see I'm quite ready; but these fellows are eating like a pack of wolves, who havn't put tooth into meat for a month, and then come across some fine fat beast or other; but if you like, I can just give the word to Tasharah, to make him feel modest like, and then perhaps we may have some chance of starting."

"Do so, for I fear if you do not, the probabilities of our proceeding while this day lasts, are but small."

"The grey head," observed the young man, addressing himself to the Mohawk chief, and making use of the peculiar Indian dialect of the person to whom he spoke, for it was as fashionable among the young borderers to speak the tongues of the various tribes who surrounded them, as it is, at the present time, for our own youth to speak that of their Gallic neighbours; "the grey head says let us be going on the path, a warrior should not tarry on the track of his enemies, for the wolf would then only leave his trail, and laugh at the foolish hunter who thought to follow him, but who went to sleep."

"My brother speaks well," replied the Indian, "but a hunter is cunning, when he is hungry and there is meat, he will eat; a thieving Piquot journeys as the heavy buffalo, but a Mohawk comes as the leaping panther. Let my brother rest till a Mohawk has eaten, then he will be strong to go on the path."

"I've asked him," said the young man, speaking to his elder comrade, "but he doesn't seem to be thinking of going for it though, for you see, Major, an Indian when he does eat, never is done, so long as there is anything left, and Tasharah isn't one bit different from the rest of them."

"I am afraid, Frank, that your observation this time is founded in truth, and that our allies will place themselves well, and thoroughly out of all danger of starving, in case fortune should not be so propitious again; but in doing this, it appears to me we are losing very valuable time; speak to them again, and make another trial of your rhetoric to persuade them to proceed."

"I'll try it again, Major, if you will, but

I'm afraid it's no use for me to talk, for all I can say won't prevent an Indian from thinking he's hungry."

Having delivered himself of this opinion, the young man addressed the Indian.

" Has the warrior forgotten what the cunning old owl does? let the Mohawk do the same, let him put some of the meat by, that his young men may eat afterwards; the greyhead warrior begins to think the legs of the Mohawk are weary."

" The legs of the Mohawk are strong," the Indian replied, " his legs are as the legs of the buffalo; let my brother say to the old Yengeese warrior, that a Mohawk is ready, the path is before his eyes, and he sees the trail of his enemies."

" All's right now, Major, I've got him at last to say he's ready, and if them Piquots havn't got hold of wings, we'll catch them long before they get right and safe as they are just now calculating upon, and will have Miss Maria away from that precious Frenchman before they think of it."

The Major expressed his pleasure at this information, and immediately rose from his recumbent position, which movement was followed by all the others.

Tasharah having formed the party into Indian file,was proceeding to lead the way himself, down the right hand bank of the little stream, when the Major exclaimed, addressing the young hunter,

"Surely, Frank, this is not our path? The trail is upon the other side, and pushes into the wood. Ask Tasharah for what reason we have quitted it, and left the only indication we possess of the route of our enemies: without it, how is it possible to devine the direction he has taken?"

"Be sure," the young man replied, "be sure, Major, Tasharah knows very well what he's after; an Indian upon the scent of his enemy, is just as keen and as sure as a pack of wolves after a deer. Be you pretty certain he's got plenty of reasons, and good ones, too, for leaving the trail, but as you say, I'll ask him what they are, just for the sake of knowing."

And then he observed to the Indian, who had halted immediately he had heard the Major speak,

"Surely a Mohawk does not go on the war-path asleep. The grey head has opened his eyes and looked for the trail of his enemies, but he cannot see it; let the cunning warrior say why did he leave the trail?"

"The Piquots are cunning, and they are many, but they are not so cunning as the Mohawks, who are but few; they will say, 'the braves of our enemies will follow us, let us leave some of our warriors upon our path to slay them.' The Mohawk shall travel swiftly and meet them at the low water."

"He says, Major," interpreted Kennedy, "that he's afraid we shall get into some ambush or other, if we go away straighforwards, and so he means to make a short cut and meet them at some ford."

"But," observed the Major, "supposing they do not proceed thither, or take some other route, we shall lose so much time that we must despair

of overtaking them; or if it should happen as Tasharah expects it will, how can we be assured of arriving first, and securing our destined position, and if we do, what advantage will it be to us."

"If the Mohawk travel swift as the flying deer, how knows he his enemies will look on the waters? If he quits the trail, how can he be quicker than men with long legs, who never look a warrior in the face?"

"A Piquot is not a fish to cross in the deep swift water. Does the swallow travel as an eagle? Is the path of the adder straight? The Frenchman knows not the way through the woods. Has not the greyhead seen how his trail is crooked?"

"He says, Major, the water's a great deal too deep to be crossed anywhere but at the ford; and as the Frenchman has managed to get into some mess about his way we are sure of being before him."

"Since that is the case, Frank, we had best lose no time but proceed at once."

Tasharah perceiving now that the Major was quite willing to follow as he should direct, pursued the course of the streamlet unhesitatingly, and boldly exerted himself to reach the spot, which he had concluded his enemies, with whose exact numbers he was unacquainted, but whom he knew were vastly superior to himself, must be attempting to reach; fully trusting and relying upon his skill and ingenuity to baffle and overcome them. His own weakness and the disparity of numbers did not cause him to pause or hesitate one moment. Quitting our travellers for a time, we will take a review of the causes which lead them thus far from the haunts of civilised men, and almost into the jaws of their foes.

CHAPTER II.

How bitter is the grief which rends the heart,
However short from those we love to part;
When the reluctant tongue is forc'd to tell
That odious word—that odious word, farewell!
How sinks the heart as if weighed down with lead,
If for a few short hours that word is said:
But when—but when—Oh! agony supreme,
We lose by death, they for whom we've been
Virtuous or base, a patriot or a slave,
Grasping or content, cowardly or brave;
Had we whole kingdoms, we would give our all,
Might we, by this, the stern decree recall.

MAJOR VERNON had been a brave and intelligent officer, and served his country in various parts of the world. At the breaking out of a war with France, he was appointed to a regiment ordered out for the protection of our American colonies; which, although they were at that period inconsiderable with regard to magnitude

of territory, yet had already begun from their appearance of prosperity and success to excite the jealousy of the French, who fearful of losing the preponderance they possessed in this quarter of the globe, menaced them with attack. During the contest which ensued, and in which many lives were lost uselessly, contending for a land which now belongs to neither, Major Vernon not only fully maintained the reputation for gallantry and bravery he had already earned, but also the bright flowers of Mercy twined with his laurel wreath. He endeavoured to impress upon his men the right to and claims for sympathy which a disarmed or incapacitated foe possessed, and was partly successful, and succeeded in curbing and restraining them from the committal of many barbarities and atrocities, but too frequently pursued by either party towards their enemies, prisoners or wounded. The cause of which might be ascribed to the numerous bodies of Indians whom either employed, and whose customs and habits of fighting the adherents gradually adopted; for it does not

require much previous exasperation to cause the excited soldier to be deaf when the cry for quarter is raised. War is, at best, but a vast game of destruction, and the spirit which animates the mass or collective body, will, unless restrained and checked both by power and example, surely pervade the whole individually, but degenerated into a ruthless and sanguinary disposition, it requires but a short acquaintance with its unpolished school of blood for the student to become both ready and a proficient in mercilessness and cruelty.

During one of his excursions the Major had rescued from out of the hands of a party of the enemy a young and beautiful girl, who, though scarce sixteen years had passed over her head, yet now found herself in the most afflicting of all situations, "an orphan." Her father, her relatives, and even her aged grandfather, one of those stern religionists who had for their adopted creed quitted the halls and the land of their fathers, deserting their secure and peaceful homes for an uncertain and armed tenure in the wilder-

ness, seeking to worship their God after their own manners and opinions, and preferring converse with Him even among savages and solitude, every instant in peril of their lives, to relation with their fellows purchased as they imagined by "His denial." His locks, bleached by time, had not protected him, and together with the whole of her family, had been cruelly and brutally murdered before her eyes; she being alone preserved through the caprice of her foes when she was so opportunely rescued out of their power.

Major Vernon, connected with some of the highest families, had, after receiving the best of educations, been placed in the army, and until the present moment his promotion had been most rapid. Wrapped up in his profession he had pursued its path with ardour; not even bestowing a thought upon a single thing which was not connected with his aspirations after military renown; and the consequence was, that with the exception of the mere passing regards of friendship, he had passed through life unscathed by

the gentle passion. But there is a divinity who permits not his authority to be either disregarded or scoffed at, and sooner or later, over all human hearts, asserts his potency. This the Major was now condemned to experience; for he conceived towards the lovely creature he had preserved the passion of love in all its violence. Disdaining to take advantage of her defenceless position, he at once made her the offer of his hand and a share in whatever might be in store for him. This he did without even consulting his friends, who considering this as a mark of disrespect, became seriously offended with him.

Maria, for that was the name of the maid, influenced by the warm feelings of gratitude, and admiration at the honorable conduct of her lover, first listened kindly to his suit, and then accepted it. When the approach of winter allowed of his retiring from immediate and active service, the Major had the nuptial ceremony performed; she, whom he had preserved, became his, and bliss and happiness appeared to be his portion.

Fortune still seemed inclined to smile upon him; and after a year Vernon found himself blessed with a daughter, whom he called "Maria," after her mother, to whom the fond father imagined, though even so young, she bore a strong resemblance.

But all human joy is transient. The brightest sky most frequently becomes the darkest clouded. A few more years passed by, and the Major had hopes of again becoming a father. Fain would he have remained beside his wife, but the imperative voice of honour and of duty called him away. His commander had desired him to undertake a difficult and dangerous task, and he considered himself bound to fulfil his superior's behest, although the situation of his wife, if pleaded in excuse, would have permitted him to decline it. Disregarding the entreaties of his Maria, who from her state of health and the nervousness thence derived, alarmed herself by imagining the occurrence of a thousand evils, he proceeded, nor conceived how those fears were but too well founded.

Success attended him upon his expedition, and he was returning home to receive the thanks of a commander who well knew how to appreciate in an officer the valuable qualifications of courage, resolution, and of consummate prudence, together with what Vernon still more regarded, the embraces of an affectionate wife, when he unexpectedly encountered a body of his enemies. The contest that ensued was warm and obstinate. Irritated at being thus stopped, and regarding with impatience each minute's delay, he placed himself at the head of a charge which proved final and victorious, but, at the same moment, as the shouts of his pursuing men were loudest in his ear, a disabled foeman leveled his weapon and fired. The officer fell and as his followers imagined mortally wounded.

Imprudently and suddenly the intelligence was conveyed to the anxious wife. Premature labour was the consequence; and in giving birth to a dead child the mother yielded up her spirit to join her husband, as she hoped, where partings

are never known, and death, as he is an impossible, is an undreaded visitant.

Vernon was gradually recovering from his wounds, when the heartrending and stunning news fell upon his ear. Had a thunderbolt burst upon him it would not have produced half the effect that did those few short words, "Thy wife is dead." A relapse ensued; fever attacked him, he became unconscious of all that passed around. For days for weeks in the wildness of his delirium he raved upon the lost one's name. Now calling her by each endearing epithet, he besought for water to cool his parched and burning throat, or when the recollection of his misfortune passed across his wandering mind, he shrieked with horror; as when some traveller about to rest himself on a bed of roses perceives by the faint light some fearful reptile coiled amid the flowers. Long and doubtful were the efforts of Nature in her struggle with the fell destroyer. At times the sick man would rally and return to consciousness, but then came the remembrance

of his loss pressing with ten-fold violence upon his breast and again he sank. During one of these calm periods, a friend introduced to his notice his daughter. He became conscious that there was something for the which to live—that there was yet a pledge remaining to claim his assiduous care, his love, and his attention. Vernon's thoughts now, in some measure, became diverted from dwelling upon the painful subject, and by having a part of their force turned into another channel, no longer harassed him as before. Slowly, but surely, the Major recovered his health; but what a different frame of mind had now become his. How altered from that Vernon the joyous and the gay, the life, the soul, the spirit of the messroom. His cheek is now but rarely visited by a smile, and the gleesome joke has become a stranger to his lips; not that he became either morose or sullen. Intrinsically he remained the same. It was the melancholy sadness of unexpectedly blighted happiness which possessed him.

As if the Major's misery had been considered

sufficient to fill to the brim the cup of woe, and was the last war desired to inflict upon his votaries, within a short period peace became restored; and now that circumstances permitted it, he resigned his commission, receiving as a reward for his past and truly valuable and zealous services a considerable grant of land.

Retiring to this gift which he had dearly earned, since, in performing the services for which it was conferred, he had wrecked and entirely lost his happiness, and in the donor's cause had perilled and been deprived of all that had either attraction or pleasure for him, Vernon devoted himself exclusively to the education of his daughter; and often did he dwell with fondness and delight upon her budding charms which recalled so forcibly to memory her to whom he was lost for the term of his mortal pilgrimage.

A few more years were soon overcome by the noiseless but rapid wings of time, when Vernon, whose grief had been mellowed, and over whose bosom, time had spread an assuaging balm, formed the determination of sending Maria to

complete her education, and be instructed in those feminine accomplishments of which he was ignorant, at the house of a near relative of his deceased wife. Although to part thus from his child was to him a source of affliction, yet he was not the man to allow his private feelings to interpose and prevent the performance of his duty; and a short time after having formed this resolution he was once again amid the busy haunts of his fellow men, whence, having arranged every thing that might conduce to the happiness or comfort of his daughter, he returned to his now truly solitary home.

But Vernon did not pass his time in uselessly regretting what was unavoidable. He sought for something upon which he might employ his mind, and quickly found his desire. Possessed of several thousand acres, he had permitted the land to lie waste and in its original state, with the exception of a very small portion, which was cultivated for the supply of the family, until the present period; but now he commenced directing the entire of his energies and almost

undivided attention to the reclaiming of his property from under the dominion of the forest; and soon it passed from the quiet, calm control of nature beneath the harsh and painful government of man. Her trees, the giant offsprings of her womb, are hewn and committed to the flames. A race of strangers from a distant and different clime usurp the spots where once the others throve. Her bosom wears innumerable wounds traced by the sharp harrows of the plough, or by the delving spade; and even the hidden floods of tears with which she weeps this change are raised by her new made lords and masters from her fountain springs. When her rights are not respected, how could her sorrows be regarded? Her griefs are made subservient to her invaders.

Four years elapsed before the father clasped in his arms the faultless form of his daughter. He had parted from her as from the bud, he found her restored to him as the full blown flower. Of the ordinary height, her figure was one upon which a Phidias would have gazed with

rapture. Her hair was of the deepest black, and fell in soft glossy ringlets down her neck. Her eyes were hazel, and sparkled as the stars of heaven; and when she smiled, her parting lips disclosed her teeth, which seemed as matchless pearls set in the most blushing coral. But faultless as she was in person her mind seemed equally well-formed. Alone one accusation could be urged against her; she was slightly tinctured with romance. But was there ever woman born without being liable to this charge, whether they be maid or mother, youthful or aged; fancy belongs, if not exclusively, yet most decidedly, particularly, to the softer and gentler sex.

However surprised and delighted her father was with her, she felt not less so at the improvements she found around; what she had left a dark and frowning wood, impervious to the strongest rays of heaven, had now become richly and highly cultivated fields. Where she had heard nought but the shrill wood-bird, now resounded with the lowing of cattle, and the sound and cries of their tenders. Spots which formerly had but served

as lairs and places of refuge for the forest beasts, and been but rarely trod even by the feet of the wandering savage, had had erected upon them log huts, the habitations of the white men. Still these signs of civilization, though striking, were anything but universal; for around these patches of clearing there still existed the old primeval wood; and often would Maria, leaning upon her father's arm, wander to some of these well-remembered spots, where, delighted with the grandeur and loveliness of the scene, she had, as a child, passed so many happy hours.

It was not often that the pretty daughter of the Major could make these rambles alone. Many an aspiring swain would remember somewhat that laid in her path; and it became a subject of remark, that since Miss Maria had arrived the hunter brought home less game, and the fish sported safer in their native element from the guiles and arts of the angler; and, most unaccountably, all the young woodsmen conceived such a violent and sudden passion for flowers, that in place of bending under the weight of fat

haunches of venison and fine trout, they would appear trudging homewards laden with scarce else than the proceeds of destructive inroads among Flora's wilder kingdom. But of all the young borderers whom Maria caused to forget their woodcraft, none were more sensibly affected than Frank Kennedy. Of a rather wild and reckless character, he was universally liked on account of his kind and obliging disposition. None excelled him in the use of the rifle; few could equal him in the performance of his other accomplishments. Often would Frank, his tendered services being accepted, zealously and officiously cleave for Maria a path through the tangled brushwood, and how joyful was he when the earnestness with which he performed his task procured for him a smile of thanks.

Twelve months passed in this quiet and peaceful manner. Autumn, with its crops and harvests; winter, with its snows and frosts; and spring, with its fickleness and change, had followed each other in rapid succession; when, towards the close of a warm summer day, Maria

proceeded with her father to take her accustomed walk, and from the delicious and refreshing coolness of the air, they were tempted to prolong it beyond their usual distance. The Major, breaking the silence which had reigned for a considerable time, observed—

"Maria, I have not heard your opinion of our forest beaux! you had an excellent opportunity lately of judging what we can produce, and now tell me which you prefer, the open, honest, plain spoken woodsman, whom you saw present at our match, or the better educated, but uncertain and reserved youths whom you encountered in your small circle whilst sojourning away from us?"

"Your question, father, is not very difficult to reply to; were I to answer as poets would dictate I am both afraid and sorry that I should not speak my own actual opinion."

"How so?" said the Major; "I had always imagined you to be so enamoured of our forests, our silent glades, our wild scenery, such an ardent admirer of nature, that I cannot compre-

hend what it is that has so suddenly directed your affections towards her sister art."

"In scenery," replied Maria, "I should not hesitate in judging which of the sisters I preferred; nature has constructed far more beautiful and far vaster domes and palaces than ever art has produced; but decidedly for comfort and for ease the latter has buildings which in their turn surpass the others. With regard to what may be considered as their particular progenies, I certainly give the preference to the children of art over those of nature; I mean those endowed with life. The flowers upon which we tread indeed are lovely, but many of them, nearly all, are in want of that brilliancy of colour, that variety of tint, as well as that exquisiteness of scent, which ours of the cultivated garden possess. The fierce tiger, the savage lion, and rapacious wolf, are far less desirable neighbours than the timid sheep, the patient and playful goat; and I am certain that you must confess that politeness, and good breeding are much more agreeable to a young lady than

roughness and rudeness, though veiled under the name of honesty and plainness."

"This is decidedly very different from what I had expected you to utter; I had imagined that you would, on the contrary, have maintained that truth was better than falsehood, and candour than dissimulation; and that you would have preferred the noble brutes, impatient under wrong, to those who suffer, without repining, every indignity, injury, and insult."

"I may admire the character without seeking a nearer acquaintance, or wishing for it in the least, with the possessor. I do not wish to maintain but that sincerity is in every way commendable. But decidedly, amidst society, a ball-room, or a circle of friends, to utter your actual opinions, would anything but add to the amusements of the evening, and prove anything but agreeable to the company at large, although they were your honest thoughts."

"I confess," said the Major, "that you have argued your case very prettily, and I also feel grieved that you should be in such very disagree-

able quarters. What say you to returning again to your late more pleasurable society, where I hope you may find some one more suited to your taste than are our foresters: for really, Maria, you are already of an age when you must be mated, and furnished with some other protector besides your father?"

"Really, father, I feel obliged to you;" replied Maria, smiling, "but I am far too proud to think of devoting myself to seek a husband. No, until I can meet with one whose affections I can return, I seek no better protector than—" and gently raising herself she kissed her father's cheek; then turning the conversation she continued, "The dews already have commenced to fall; had we not better return, for forest damps are not improvements to health?"

"As you will, my child; but what upon the whole was your opinion of the late match?"

"I certainly was rather disappointed—since I had been told that we could boast of the best

marksmen of all America—to find the mark struck so seldom."

"Such was the case, and I was myself at first at a loss to account for it, until I discovered that while one eye was fixed upon the target, the other was sedulously in search of the prize which was placed close to the Queen of the day. Nay, I even suspect that it wandered rather frequently to your own person."

"Indeed! I regret exceedingly that I should have been the cause of disappointment to any of the contenders, and feel grieved that I undertook the office which I did. But who was the stranger who bore the prize away from amidst all our celebrated competitors?"

"It seems that he is entirely unknown to all; and the only information which I have been enabled to obtain amounts to this. He is a Frenchman from the Canadas, allured into our neighbourhood in his search after the amusements of the chase, which he pursues. But see, the object of your enquiries is himself approaching us."

As the Major spoke, the individual who formed the subject of conversation, appeared advancing towards them, down one of the forest glades; and from his easy, gentlemanly carriage and deportment, it required no second glance of father or daughter to convince them that he was above the common herd of hunters, whose sole inducement in following the chase was the profit derived from the occupation. Approaching the Major and his daughter, who had halted to receive him, he raised his light hunting cap, then having performed his salute, he addressed himself to the former, speaking in very excellently pronounced English.

"I feel thankful to my good genius for thus affording me an opportunity of offering my excuses for my late apparent rudeness in not having thanked you for the kind and impartial manner with which you permitted me, being a perfect and unknown stranger, to contend for, and, when successful, to bear away the prize at the late match."

"I only performed the conditions by which

we had bound ourselves previously; for by the terms of our challenge, we had promised to each competitor all courtesy and justness, the consequence of which was, that our proud and boasted superiority, suffered a rude shock, by being lost entirely to a foreigner: but allow me to know who it is that has thus succeeded in wresting from us our renown, and depriving us of the pre-eminence which we imagined we possessed in the usage of the rifle?"

"My name is but a poor one, Sir, it is Laborde."

"What! the son of the Marquis Laborde?"

"The same; my king, influenced by some evil disposed persons, was prevailed on to listen to an unjust, and perfectly unfounded accusation, which was urged against me by some of my enemies, and has committed me to an honorary banishment to my possessions in his province of the Canadas."

"On my part," observed the Major, "I must confess that the pleasure I derive from this meeting is great, since I happened, at one period,

to be well acquainted with your father, or rather was his prisoner, and will confess, that a braver or more gallant soldier, never did exist—But allow me to introduce my daughter."

This ceremony of courtesy performed, Vernon continued,

"You really must allow me to repay, in some measure, the civilities which I received from your father during my captivity, by your making your residence at my home, during your stay in our neighbourhood."

"For your offer I thank you, and shall accept it with pleasure, the more so as I have often heard my father speak in the highest terms of Captain Vernon, and shall feel delighted by renewing, in my own person, an acquaintance of which my father was ever proud to boast."

"Have you been long resident in this part of the world?" inquired the Major.

"My arrival dates not farther back than a twelvemonth, though I am absent from France about five years, the greater proportion of which period has been passed in England."

"Are you in a military or civil capacity?"

"A mixture of both, Sir," replied Laborde, smiling, "my sovereign has confided to me the civil power over the district in which the greater proportion of the property my father left me is contained, and which is situated upon Lake St. Louis, but I find that my new subjects rule themselves pretty well without me; and as I enjoy and take far more pleasure in following up the amusements of the chase, to the fatigue incident upon government, we agree exceedingly well together."

"You do not find, I am afraid, the game very plentiful about here? the clearings have already driven it farther into the interior."

"Such is the case, and it was alone, the intelligence of the projected match, together with the desire of upholding the honour of my nation, which brought and caused me to undertake a journey, which I do not in the least regret, since not only have I successfully asserted my country's skill, but it has procured me the pleasure of an acquaintance with Major Vernon."

Vernon bowed, and then observed,

"You have made the most of your time, and considering the short period you have been in this country the skill with which you handle your weapon, is almost wonderful."

"I have been accustomed to it nearly from my childhood."

"I thought it was a weapon but rarely used in Europe."

"True, but my father, who resided in the Canadas for a considerable period, on quitting the country took home with him a hunter, to whom I owe all or any skill which I may possess."

"You speak our language so exceedingly perfect, that I should have imagined your residence in England to have been of much longer duration; but we are close at home."

As he uttered this, a large and commodious log-house appeared in view, which, on a nearer approach, seemed to partake as much of the character of a fortress as of a peaceful dwelling-house. Its shape was square, and it was sur-

mounted with towers; its walls, composed of large blocks of wood, were well looped; its windows were provided with massy oak shutters, and the door, composed of the same strong and durable material, might, if closed in time, easily prevent the entrance of any one hostile to the inmates. A ditch of about six feet in breadth, crossed by a bridge which could be removed at pleasure, and at a minute's warning, entirely encompassed the dwelling at the distance of about one hundred feet, and betwixt it and the house, were planted several bushes and large shrubs, which were so placed as to serve the double purpose of ornament or redoubts. The house itself seemed large enough to contain some three or four score of individuals, and thus garrisoned, would be, as far as regarded the natives, impregnable.

Laborde's eye rapidly ran over what we have been describing, and turning to the Major, he said,

"I see that in taking up the ploughshare, you have not entirely abandoned the sword; you

could easily hold out for a length of time, unless your opponents were provided with cannon, and might make a very pretty defence; with forty men you might hold a much larger body at bay."

"Yes," replied the Major, "I was a witness to so many atrocities committed by the Indians during the last war, that I determined to place myself in as secure a state as possible."

Crossing the bridge he then welcomed Laborde to his home.

"Thank you," replied Laborde; "were the only thing necessary to ensure my rest," he continued glancing at Maria, "to be the consciousness of my security, I am not so sure that I should sleep this night, as sound as though I were a jaded prisoner enclosed within the stone arms of the Bastile."

"But your dreams also will not torment you with the prospects of freedom," said Vernon, "which will betray their falsity upon the instant of waking, and condemn you to feel more poignantly than ever, that you are a captive."

"I rather doubt that," Laborde replied, "yet I hope that I may experience the truth of your words."

Maria in a few minutes retired, and her example was presently followed by both her father and Laborde, but no until they had partaken of a hearty supper.

CHAPTER III.

"Each demon of murder peeped forth from his glen,
And joyous and joyous they smiled,
Impelled by their mirth, each one then
Join'd, join'd in a chorus, loud, startling and wild.

"Let's summon each blood-loving beast;
Let's call the gaunt wolf from his lair:
Man himself prepareth the feast,
And murder sweet scenteth the air.

"It is not for nought we rebel—
That we've dared the powers on high;
It was not for nought that we fell,
And lost our just claim to the sky.

"Full well we're aveng'd on the Lord;
Aveng'd for our fall and disgrace;
And using the murderer's sword,
We've clouded with sorrow his face.

"Hurrah! hurrah! Come, let us sing,
Ere our revel be broke by the day,
Of the dagger's sharp fatal sting,
Of our hate to the proud sons of clay.

"How sweet 'tis to see the red stain
Wherever we look on the earth,
And to know man again and again
Shall give us such cause for our mirth."

Now, whilst host and guest are alike under the influence of the poppy god, and sleep, nestling beneath the wings of night, sooner alights upon the stony couch of one of its humblest votaries, than visits the soft down of those who seek for the sweet blessings of repose and forgetfulness in vain, and who toss on their fevered beds, seeking an oblivion which it is not in their power to obtain, we will take the opportunity to make our reader acquainted with the new character we have introduced upon our stage. And our tale once begun, we flatter ourselves, if we are followed to its conclusion, that it will not be found wanting in interest.

Laborde, the only son of the marquis of that name, was born during the reign of Louis the Fifteenth. Having had the misfortune to lose both his parents at a very tender age, he had been left to the care and protection of an old friend and fellow soldier of his father, who was

frequently in attendance upon the court. Here, left continually to himself, or to the association with young nobles, whose morals had been fully depraved by a long course of licence, and by the latitude allowed by the present reign, he soon entered with all the zest of a young and ardent mind into the amusements of his companions; but more gradually into the vortex of riot, dissipation, and debauchery.

At first, indeed, he was startled by the many and continual scenes of immodesty and crime with which he came in contact; but the force of habit soon wore this off, and among his vicious and light associates none were more celebrated than Laborde. To a well formed person he added great agility and strength, which placed him foremost in all the sports of his age; whilst a high brow and handsome contour of countenance caused the heart of many a fair demoiselle to ache.

But great was the difference betwixt the outward promise and the inward man. The one was fair and beautiful, the other dark and

loathsome. Fierce and ungovernable in his passions, if once his appetite were excited for aught, no gentle whisperings of virtue were ever heard, or allowed to place their obstacles in his path. No difficulty could hinder him from attaining anything upon which he had once fixed his wishes. Passionate and revengeful, he never forgave either injury or slight; but treasuring up the supposed affront, would watch his opportunity of repaying it, no matter how long the space of time which intervened after its infliction. Deceitful and patient, he could conceal his desires under a mask of virtue. He was a treacherous pit, over whose mouth grew flowers fair and sweet; but if once the inadvertent traveller, tempted by the fair prospect, should venture to tread upon the inviting but deceitful spot, his security would vanish, and for his confidence he would be destroyed, and dashed many fathoms into the abyss below.

His career of dissipation and frequent gallantries had highly offended his virtuous protector, and procured him, from the latter, both threats

and reproofs; but a *liaison* with a pretty *bourgeoise* sealed his fate. He was ordered to travel, for the double purpose of separating him from his companions, and for the attainment of information.

Previous to this, Laborde had formed a close intimacy with a young Englishman, the only son of the British ambassador, then resident in Paris, and had been by him introduced into his father's family. Here he first saw and immediately loved the beauteous Alice. Mr. Cunningham being recalled, his niece and son accompanied him to England; not, however, before the depraved heart of Laborde had experienced an indelible impression; therefore, when the order arrived, it found him perfectly willing to obey its behests, and crossing with alacrity into England, he renewed his acquaintance with the family, one of whose members he had determined to make his victim.

Alice was also an orphan, having lost both her parents when she was so young that she scarc retained the least remembrance of them. Sh

was left to the guardianship of her uncle, Mr. Cunningham, who had but one child of his own, a son, and the affection of her foster parents in some measure compensated for the loss of those whom nature had intended as her protectors.

Laborde was received and welcomed with all the warmth of friendship; nor did either Mr. Cunningham or his son suspect for one instant what a viper was being nourished by the warmth of their hospitable hearth, one who was so industriously sowing the seeds of mischief, which required only the lapse of a short period to swell into the spreading tree of error, whose fruits are ruin and dismay. The Frenchman's visits were frequent; and his attentions to Alice were both more particularly and more kindly received than was at all agreeable to the jealous Vincent. One day he offered to conduct her to see some exhibition of our wonder-producing metropolis. Punctual to his appointment he was ready to escort her, and she quitted for the last time the roof which had sheltered her from her infancy.

Hours rolled on, no Alice returned; her protracted absence began to cause even Mr. Cunningham to feel uneasy. He sent a servant to enquire at the exhibition they had purposed visiting, and see if he could obtain any news concerning them, who returned with the information that no one answering the description of those he sought had been to the rooms that day. When he heard this, a fearful suspicion crept over him; he despatched a servant to the chamber of the absentee, and by this all his worst fears were verified; the intelligence was communicated to him that the room was in the greatest disorder, and a letter at the same minute was placed in his hands, which had been found upon the dressing table. With eager hands he tore it open. The writing was in the hand of Alice; the ill-formed letters bore evidence to the agitation of the writer, and many were the pearly drops which had fallen upon its surface. He read—

"Excuse, forgive the step which I have taken. Pardon the fault which I have committed, think not harshly of me, thou who hast been to me a

father. How dearly I love you, and how bitter I feel this pang of parting, these tears alone can tell. Would that I were able to disburthen my heart, and lay it upon this paper, then could I in proper terms declare the grief and sorrow which rend this aching bosom, and you might then perceive of how fierce a conflict it has become the centre. When my name is uttered, couple it not, I beseech thee, with the epithet ungrateful. What I have done has been urged upon me by my unhappy fate. Misfortune has made me her plaything since my birth; first she deprived me of my parents, and then causes me to grieve thee who didst tend my infant footsteps with the jealous care of a father. Would that I had some means of showing my gratitude, or that the tears which I now shed were gems, then should thy riches indeed be vast. Oh! sometimes think of Alice, for she will never cease to think of thee; and however great may be the number of years which shall elapse, still will she dwell with pleasure on the remembrance that once thy love was hers. Oh! pardon me; but I know your generous dis-

position; never have I had need to appeal twice to it. I cannot write farther; my hand refuses.

"Pardon your afflicted niece,

"ALICE."

Whilst Mr. Cunningham was reading this, his son Vincent rushed into the room, his face pale, his eyes bloodshot, and addressing his father he said,

"Father! father! can this be true?"

"But too true," replied Mr. Cunningham, a sigh accompanying his words, "read this epistle! It proves too clearly, Alice has been deceived by some designing villain," and handing the letter to his son, he seated himself upon a chair whilst the latter should peruse it. The eyes of the young man swiftly wandered over its disordered lines, his brows knitted, his teeth clenched, and he half hissed out—

"That rascally Frenchman! that accursed villain, Laborde has done this; and dearly shall he pay for it; his heart's blood shall wash out in its own streams this foul stain;" and saying this

he was about hastily to quit the room, when his father exclaimed,

"Stay, Vincent, be cool; recollect yourself; be not too hasty. Wherefore and for what reason do you suspect Laborde? What grounds or what foundation is there for your charge?"

"Suspect him, father," the young man replied with a sneer; "I could more easily have replied to you had you enquired, what has convinced me of his being the villain who has misled our Alice. I called at his house, on my way home, wishing to speak to him for a few minutes, and then I learnt that he had quitted it in company with a lady some hours past. Consider the time and everything, and then say who could this be but our deceived Alice? Now I go—nay, I must not, will not, be detained. I know what you would say,—I will return to his house, will question the people, and then, if what I suspect, I fear too truly, be confirmed, then Laborde look to yourself; no spot on the globe shall conceal you from my search,

nor shall there be for you any sanctuary from my vengeance."

Uttering this the young man rushed from his father, and flying rather than running, soon reached the residence of him whose ingratitude he had such good reason to suspect. With eager demeanour and rapid utterance, he enquired of the woman to whom the house belonged, concerning the lady who had accompanied Laborde; she replied to his interrogatories with the information that, about two o'clock Laborde had come home having a lady with him, and that "poor thing," she was crying a great deal, though he did all he could to quiet her. After waiting about half an hour a travelling chaise drew up at the door, and Laborde and the lady got into it and drove away; then, impelled by the love of mischief so inherent to her sex, she produced a brooch, which had been left behind, and which, but for this impulse, she otherwise would have kept. Vincent recognised it at once as belonging to his cousin. He required no farther proof, and with speed equal to that in leaving, he

returned to his home, provided himself with cash, ordered and mounted his horse, and rode off in what he imagined to be the direction of the fugitives.

Meanwhile Laborde strained every nerve to throw pursuers off his path. Sparing no sum of money he soon placed a creditable distance behind him. After having been whirled and jolted over about fifteen miles, he and Alice—for she, poor girl, had indeed accompanied him—alighted from the chaise, and, taking a bye path, proceeded to a small village, situated out of the direct line of the high road. Here they passed the night, and the next morning, hiring a fresh carriage, Laborde made a circuit of the metropolis, and finally rested in a small town situate from it about five miles, and upon the very opposite quarter to that by which he had quitted, and where he had had the precaution to procure apartments for himself and Alice, the latter passing for his wife, whilst he pretended to be a teacher of the French language. Few were his pupils, but he required them not. Those

which he did have he took alone for the purpose of avoiding the gossip which otherwise good-natured folks would have found it incumbent upon themselves to make as to his concerns, and by reducing himself to a level with the shop-keepers and little men who surrounded him he avoided a disagreeable prominence and the envy and hatred which would have been its consequent attendants. His remittances, ample and more than sufficient for his wants, were regularly transmitted to him under a feigned name through the hands of a trusty agent; for, before he had put into execution the plan he had formed of persuading Alice to flee with him, he had informed the person who received for him his allowance from France that he was about to travel through the interior of England, and as he wished to observe the domestic habits and customs of the people, he desired to observe a strict incognito; and for this purpose would drop his name for a short period. No objection was raised to this, and the deceiver Laborde lived in

affluence, and among the few with whom he was acquainted he was treated with respect.

Two years of pain, misery, sorrow, humiliation and ingratitude to the many, and of slight rays of joy, pleasure, happiness, and riches to a very few, passed swiftly by; and now Laborde began to experience the effects of satiety. Already he fancied Alice appeared less blooming, her cheek seemed faded, her voice less melodious, and her eyes, from being frequently overflowed with tears, had lost their fire. For now, oftentimes, in the loneliness of her chamber she mourned with unavailing regret that roof whose kind protection she had left; still she strove to conceal her dejection from her betrayer and prevent him from being sensible of her misery, lest she should give him pain.

Laborde, however, in spite of her efforts, perceived it, and one evening, thoroughly discontented with himself and every one else, he proceeded to take a ramble in some fields adjacent to the town. Already he had walked some distance, and the cool air had in some measure allayed his

irritation. He turned to retrace his steps homewards, when he perceived a man rapidly approaching him, and saw from his manner, that it was evidently his intention to accost him. Under the impression that he was a thief he grasped tightly in his hands a heavy loaded stick which he had with him; but presently he recognised the cousin of Alice, Vincent Cunningham. In expectation that the encounter would be hostile he awaited his approach, and in silence.

"Thank heaven!" the young man exclaimed, as he came up, "thank heaven, I have met you, deceiver and seducer, for now shall you meet the fate your villany deserves."

"What! does the honourable Mr. Vincent Cunningham require my purse and money," said Laborde with a sneer, "or perhaps my coat and hat," he continued glancing contemptuously at these garments of his adversary, "or perhaps he may inform me how he dares to stop, and address such language to any one at this hour of the night."

"Wretch! you well know what I seek; I re-

quire, and nought else will satisfy me, your life, for the deep injury you have inflicted upon my family. True my clothes are worn, but it was in seeking for thee, that I might wreak my just revenge."

"Oh! I perceive," replied Laborde smiling bitterly, "Mr. Vincent is more partial to the occupation of a cut-throat. Robbery is not sufficiently secure for him; but he must assure himself of not being discovered by adding murder to it. I suppose he considers dead men tell no tales, and on this account he purposes to dispose of me."

"By heavens! and dare you to taunt me thus? Where is my gentle cousin, my cousin Alice?"

"At my own home," replied Laborde with provoking coolness.

"Then shall either you or I never quit this place with life! Here take this;" and producing a brace of pistols he gave one to Laborde, who taking it into his left hand, observed,

"I know nothing about the method of using this weapon. Suppose I do not choose to avail

myself of your kindness, and refuse to fight with what I am unacquainted?"

"Thank me rather, sir, for having done as I have, and placed you, with regard to arms, on equal terms with myself; but if you refuse to avail yourself of what my courtesy has allowed, on the instant I will punish you as a recreant, and shoot you where you stand."

"In that case I have no alternative. Perhaps you will also inform me of the regulations with regard to distance, which you may choose to observe?"

"Back to back, we will each advance five paces, and then turn and fire."

"Be it so," said Laborde, and he turned as if he were about to comply. The ill-fated Vincent did the same, when, with the rapidity of lightning the treacherous Frenchman raised his heavy stick, and brought it with fatal strength and precision full on the young man's temple; the latter rolled a corpse at his feet, the force of the blow having shattered completely one side of the head.

Laborde stood some minutes irresolute what he should do. He had committed an act which he well knew would entail upon him the severest rigor of the law. He had, morally speaking, wilfully committed murder, and its blood was upon his hands. The act itself, as far as regarded the crime, affected him but very little; it was the merited punishment he dreaded, and all that occupied his thoughts for the present, was how to avoid its infliction. To return home and appear perfectly ignorant and innocent of the act, or to avow it, were the only courses which presented themselves. He considered that the security the first offered, was but very slight, for it was probable that a thousand little circumstances he was at present overlooking, would point him out; then would the defence, that he was compelled to slay the man, or fight and peril his own life, be not only useless but contemptuous, making him appear as a cowardly assassin, and suspicion would naturally be awakened by the evident attempt at, and desire for concealment; but he might boldly confess it,

glossing the deed over with some tale or fabrication. There were no witnesses, and could not be to the actual encounter, for the night was dark and objects scarcely distinguishable at a hundred yards' distance. The murderer had decided; first stooping down, Laborde minutely searched the pockets of him who had so vilely fallen by his hands, carefully removing and concealing each piece of paper that might lead to the discovery as to who he was. He then returned one of the pistols to the pockets of the dead man, and discharging the other cast it upon the ground. Dropping his stick, he at first walked coolly away for the purpose of arranging his ideas, directing his course towards an inn distant about a mile. When, however, he was within about two hundred yards of the house, having previously disordered his dress so as to bear every appearance of having been engaged in a violent struggle, he ran hastily forwards, and entering with well affected haste and alarm, he addressed the host.

"For Heaven's sake, come with me quick, for

I fear I have slain a man who attempted to rob me."

"Has any on 'em been trying to look into your pockets?" replied the landlord, with a mixture of fear and curiosity.

"It was attempted but just now to rob me; and in defending my property I have wounded my assailant, and have come here to request your assistance. If you will render it me, I shall be most happy to pay you for what time I shall occupy."

"Oh! never mind that, Sir; I'll be with you instantly. Here, John, get my gun for me; and you, Thomas, the fork and shovel; they're 'hind the stable door. Wouldn't you, Sir, like a glass of something stiff and strong? for them highwaymen are terrible fellows for fright'ning a chap; and I don't wonder at your coming across some of them, there's such lots of bad characters about."

"Thank you, a glass of brandy; but let us be quick, or the man may die."

"That I will, Sir," replied the host, producing

a bottle of a fiery mixture, honoured and flattered with the *name* of brandy, and filling a glass from its contents, presented it to Laborde, who, with admirable prudence and endurance, swallowed the fluid, being careful not to incur the displeasure of the landlord by pronouncing it detestable, and then tendering a guinea piece in payment, he said:

"Let us start immediately. Assistance, if to be of avail, must be prompt."

"Directly, Sir; I'll only get the change, and my—"

"Never mind," replied Laborde, interrupting him, "a man's life is of far more value."

And saying this, he hastily quitted the room; nor was this appearance and affectation of deep concern without policy, as will hereafter be shown.

The host, not at all discontented at being so well paid for his liquor, quickly followed one who was so generous, and inclined to dispose so freely of his money; but not, however, without the old fowling piece, which might, indeed, have

gone off, but was far more likely to burst. Being accompanied and supported by his two men, respectively armed with a pitchfork and shovel, coming up with Laborde he enquired the particulars.

"I am," the latter replied, "a resident in the neighbouring town, and left my house, only a few hours past, with intent to take my accustomed evening walk. Prevailed upon by the fineness of the weather, I extended it beyond my usual distance; when, just as I was getting alarmed from the lateness of the hour, and had begun to think of returning, a ruffianly-looking man suddenly rushed upon me, demanding my money, at the same time presenting his pistol at me for the purpose of enforcing his rude request. I immediately flung myself upon him, and commenced a furious struggle, in the course of which the pistol of my adversary went off, either by design or accident, sending its bullet close to my head. I had a heavy stick in my hand, which I had hitherto been unable to use; but now, as he was placing his hand into his pocket in search

of, as I thought at the time, another weapon, an opportunity occurred, and I struck him a blow on the head, which I fear has slain him. Still, I hope we may be in time to render him assistance; that is, if none of his comrades have been before us, and borne him off."

At the mention of the possibility of there being other gentlemen of the cloth, Boniface's courage began to ooze. He wisely considered that if the wounded man had any companions or friends they would very naturally desire to carry him off, and perhaps he might encounter some of them thus engaged, and he would be compelled to join with his companions in an attempt to hinder them; and then the idea of a bullet whistling close to his head was anything but agreeable food for the imagination; for a second might follow, and by a little lateral inclination effectually put a stop to his ever securing robbers again. Reflecting on this, he examined the priming of his venerable piece, and more than once cocked it as some shrub or bush seemed to his excited fancy to partake of the appearance

of a party of robbers bearing off their fallen comrade. At last breaking the silence, which had become excessively painful to Laborde, who knew not what was occupying his companion's mind, and had begun to fear lest he were doubted, he said—

"I really think, Sir, we had much better go slower; for who knows but there mightn't be a whole lot of them in the next hedge;" and he looked suspiciously around as if to assure himself none of the "thems" were within pistol shot.

"It might be so," replied Laborde, well pleased at this proposition to decrease the swiftness of their pace, for as the reader may have suspected, he had, in truth, no desire that Vincent should be succoured too soon; "it might be so, and on this account your best plan would be to send one of your men in front for the purpose of informing us in time of the appearance of any danger."

Boniface immediately acted upon this suggestion, and calling his two men, he commanded one of them to proceed about ten yards in advance

of himself, and if he heard or saw anything which appeared of a doubtful character immediately to report it. Now it had happened that the same thoughts which had been occupying the mind of the master, had also formed the theme for conversation of his valorous domestics, and they had mutually regaled each other with recounting the horrible murders and revenge perpetrated by the daring crew, one of whose members they doubted not they were about to help to an elevation; and they had come to the conclusion that this action would call forth both the gratitude and remembrance of the survivors, but rather in a way disagreeable to themselves and highly prejudicial to their healths; and the consequence of which was that not only did they feel very uncomfortable and ill at ease, but also anything but filled with overdaring or too much boiling courage; and they now had conceived such an affection for each other, that when called upon, they either declined to separate from his fellow, or to accept the post of honor thus offered them.

It was in vain their master spoke, reproving them in most powerful language for "being such cowards," until at last excited by their obstinacy, Boniface declared he would shoot at them if not immediately obeyed; present fears overcame their scruples, and one of the men reluctantly took up the position he was desired, but at the same time was careful not to be too distant from his comrades, but, like a prudent general, kept his supports close at hand; he placed himself pretty exactly about four yards in advance. This, however, was sufficient for his master, who took good care to place him as a bulwark and shield between his own precious person and every doubtful object. John, who brought up the rear, observed the same precaution with regard to his master, rightly considering it would be no common bullet that would pierce his rotundity of person, or do injury to him after having traversed such a mass.

This having been arranged to the satisfaction of at least one of the party, they proceeded in the direction Laborde pointed out; but now a new

cause of dread and of distrust assailed the breast of the latter: Vincent might recover, he might only have been stunned, and then, although the law might not affect him, yet he felt assured every honorable man would execrate his base attempt. A thousand times did he wish he had thoroughly ascertained that the vital spark had fled, and that life had been completely extinguished. Impelled by these thoughts he determined to put an end to his doubts, and rid himself of all cause of apprehension, by preventing, even if it were necessary to repeat his blow, his unhappy victim from ever recovering; so, addressing himself to Boniface, he said,

"I really think it would be advisable to quicken our steps, since the smallest delay might lose the man his life, and we ought not to be far distant from the spot."

"Yes, sir, but remember I'm not so young as you are, and I'm—"

"Ha! it is there! the next field," exclaimed Laborde, and darting away, he was soon by the side of the murdered.

He placed his hand above the heart to feel if there were any pulsation. With joy he found there was none, and he arose with a feeling even stronger than exultation at discovering it was but a corpse which laid at his feet; but this emotion was soon mastered, and by the time his companions joined him, no traces of this passion remained upon his countenance

After a few words the body was raised, and borne away towards the Inn, between the two men; Boniface followed, too much occupied with his dread of tracking robbers to pay any attention to Laborde, and the latter was but too happy to escape into the privacy of his own breast not to find this silence agreeable.

Being arrived at a path which led towards the town, Laborde, first giving his address, directed himself homewards, where he related his evening's adventure to Alice in nearly the same terms as he had described it to mine host: which having done, he sat himself down to write a letter to his agent, to request him to send him an able lawyer, as soon as possible, who might undertake his de-

fence, or rather watch the proceedings, that they should not take a turn disadvantageous to him.

Having dispatched this, he sat himself down to reflect; but his mind was too much agitated to allow him to think. He sent Alice to bed that he might be alone, and sought to banish the horror with which his mind was filled, and to calculate what were the chances of his tale being believed or discredited.

That which he fain would lose, would not depart; it remained pressing on his soul as some fearful incubus; he became feverish, he walked about; his throat and tongue, although he drank frequently, seemed burning: his hands and body became hot, and he felt terrified at the least noise: he feared that it might be some one coming to apprehend him: every passing footstep startled him, and sent the blood curdling to his heart. He laid himself down, and finding how useless for the present it was to seek for cool reflection, he sought to lose his excitement in sleep, and courted successfully the power of slumber.

But now fresh horrors arose in the agitated and contending flood of his soul; those thoughts which he had hoped to disburthen himself of, and to lose, appeared to the heated vision of his mind ten times more terrible; as when the wearied and worn mariner now congratulates himself upon the avoidance of some hidden and treacherous shoal, but then discovers some bed of rocks, over whose sharp and destructive points the waves are fearfully dashing, and towards which he is irresistibly driving.

In fancy, he was again in Paris. Again he met the blooming and once innocent Seraphine; he advanced towards her, but lightly and almost aerially she avoided him; he followed; now he gains upon her, she is almost within his grasp, and then with a wild laugh she bounds away far from him. Now the scene changed with that quickness and strangeness peculiar to dreams, and he found himself in the vault of his family. Each niche again was lighted as when last he beheld it, and its rapacious jaws were opened to receive his father. He heeded not the surround-

ing gloom; she whom he pursued was there;—and now she is in his arms! He stoops to snatch an impassioned kiss, when, intensity of horror! it is a cold, bloody, disfigured corpse he clasps! He tries to fling it from him, but he cannot,—it seems as though glued to his arms. In vain he seeks to call for help; his lips part not at his wish, and now he seems compelled by some controlling power. He has willed a kiss, and he must have his desire. His mouth gradually approaches that of his victim. In vain he struggles. Wild screams and shrieks are echoing in his ear,—the eyes of the corpse gleam with a strange and fearful lustre,—the smell of the dead is in his nostrils. Nature can endure no longer. His efforts awaken him. He starts up, the room is in darkness, he gropes his way onwards with extended hands, finds the door, and rushing upstairs, flings himself, without undressing, upon the bed.

CHAPTER IV.

Laws are all cobwebs made by men,
To catch the lesser flies;
The rich man easy breaks through them.
The poor one's stopped and dies.

Sophistry who's ready sold
Doth justice sometimes blind;
But strong and heavy chains of gold
Can law the firmest bind.

ABOUT noon on the day but one succeeding that in which the events recorded in our last chapter took place, a post chaise tore through the little town of ——, and passed, without one moment's stoppage, the comfortable hotel before whose door was erected a long upright post, surmounted by a flaming and most interesting picture, certainly representing something, but what, was to all but the initiated both a subject of doubt and

perplexity. Perhaps the painter who had represented it had had some slight glimmerings of the idea our excellent poet has put so well to rhyme,

> "That prophet ill performed his holy call,
> Who finds not heaven to suit the tastes of all."

But instead of reading it thus, it is probable he altered the words, repeating to himself,

> "At that poor painter all the critics bark
> Who crowds not in his canvas Noah's ark,"

for he who had produced this *chef d'œuvre* had so artfully coloured and shaded his piece, that it bore a distant and faint resemblance to everything from an elephant to a grasshopper, from an ostrich to a camel-leopard. Ill-natured people maintained it most resembled a daub, its friends discovered a strong family likeness to most representations of the brave and invincible Saint George and the savage but conquered dragon.

The chaise dashed on with all the velocity possible; in vain the dapper little waiter rushed to the porch; in vain also the chambermaids bustled, and even the landlord drew himself up

with dignity to receive his expected guest; but all this was in vain, the expectations of all were doomed to be thwarted, the wheels rumbled past and were evidently each moment getting more distant. The post-boy who certainly appeared as though he might claim the dignity of manhood, gave but one loud melancholy smack with his whip, and the above mentioned waiter heaving a sigh, jerked his white towel under his arm, as he saw a visionary perspective of two shillings fade from his view as the figures of a phantasmagoria.

On rolled the chaise at as swift a pace as the two poor lean animals who dragged it could be urged to proceed, receiving their admonitions and corrections from a long thin whip; on it rolled, now through a large puddle of mud, and now threatening dislocation to the travellers' bones as it banged over the large stones, or dived into some deep rut. At last, after having encountered a full number of vicissitudes both of flood and road, it drew up at the door of Laborde's cottage, and a gentleman having alighted and

directed the chaise to wait, was ushered into the sitting room.

"What name, please, sir?" enquired a fat, short serving girl, for the double purpose of satisfying her own laudable curiosity, (for what right have masters to receive visitors unless their servants know as much about them as they do themselves), and of delivering her information to the higher powers.

"Give my card to your master," replied the gentleman, with rather a pompous air, producing one and handing it between his fingers to the girl, who, directly the door was closed, proceeded to decipher it, and after considerable efforts of her genius, she succeeded in spelling and fully making out, "Mr. Bettys, Solicitor."

Whilst the maid was thus employed, Mr. Bettys, who doubted not but that the effect of his messenger would be to produce the immediate appearance of his client, proceeded to make preparations for the conference he felt convinced would ensue, by laying aside some of the encumbrances of dress. A bag which he carried with

him of threatening bulk and of an ominous blue colour, was laid upon a chair, his hat and gloves were next deposited upon the table, and he himself walked to the window, seemingly with the intention of admiring the scenery.

We must be speedy in our description of this individual, for hark! even now some one is descending the stairs. Mr. Bettys stood, boots and stockings included, just five feet seven inches; he was habited in a loose fitting black coat, and his nether extremities in a pair of pepper and salt unmentionables; his feet were placed in a pair of strong stout shoes fastened with what were intended to represent silver buckles, but the plating was worn off, discovering the original metal, of a most suspicious looking copper cast, and a long queue tied with black riband, ornamented, and was pendant from his seat of learning.

With regard to his countenance, his forehead was rather low, but broad. His eyes had a continual twinkle in them, but whether proceeding from cunning or good nature it was difficult to determine. His mouth appeared firm, with the

exception of an occasional slight, uncertain smile which hovered at the corners. With one hand under his coat tails, he seemed not to heed the opening of the door, but fixing the thumb of the other more firmly in his waistcoat pocket, he appeared completely enchanted and engrossed with the country prospect; and only when the intruder had advanced half-way across the room did he turn and confront Laborde, who was exceedingly pale from the agitation under which he had laboured for nearly two days past, and which appearance was heightened from his being dressed in a morning gown.

"Mr. Bettys, I presume?" enquired Laborde.

"That is my card, sir, which you have at present in your hand," replied that gentleman, as though indignant of a question that implied a doubt as to his identity, "and I am he whom you have named. I was requested by M. Laffranc to come down here to watch a case for you, you being, as I supposed, M. Leprince, who was attempted to be robbed on the seventeenth instant."

"I am so, sir, and feel much obliged to you for the diligence you have used, as I have had a summons to attend the enquiry which will occur shortly, and wish to avail myself of your professional skill."

"Indeed! What day is named in the paper?"

"For the ensuing Friday; but pray be seated."

"Thank you," said Mr. Bettys, who immediately took possession of a chair, and having ensconced himself therein, proceeded: "Friday did you say? That is extremely short notice. We have but very little more than a single day to meet and remove all our difficulties. But let us at once to business. How did this affair occur?"

"It was thus."

And Laborde gave the account of his having been stopped and nearly robbed, in the same manner as he had given it before, and that in a precise and clear manner; for he had now got his tale, from frequent repetition, quite perfect. At

the close, Mr. Bettys seemed to ponder some minutes, and then said, fixing such a keen glance upon Laborde that the latter felt half inclined to believe he was suspected, and fearful of being so he shrank from encountering it.

"Did you ever meet or encounter this man before?"

This was asked in a quiet, cautious, professional manner, as much as to say, "if you have, do not tell me so," and Laborde, who was seldom perplexed, recollecting himself, replied:

"No; not to my knowledge."

"This will do, as far as regards that," said Mr. Bettys, who seemed to think again for some minutes, and then continued: "Is the inn keeper, to the best of your belief, the first person who saw you after the occurrence?"

"He is so; at least, I am ignorant of any other, which I should consider the darkness of the night would hinder."

"Do you know anything about him—what character does he bears? for he will be an important witness."

"I believe him to be a very good, honest man, and also that his character is irreproachable; at least, I only speak from my slight knowledge of him, and from never having heard anything to his disparagement."

"Do you remember if your dress was much disordered, or so much so that it is probable his attention might have been drawn to observe it?"

An ambiguous smile played round the mouth of the questioner, as though he divined beforehand the answer he was about to receive; but Laborde was upon his guard, and replied without hesitation:

"I could not have been engaged in the severe struggle which I was without betraying it upon my person and dress; and I should have imagined he must have perceived my disorder, for a friend whom I met on entering the town, and almost immediately after parting from him, did so."

"Ah! his evidence will be material. But please to wait a few minutes whilst I make some notes for the purpose of guiding me;" and say-

ing this Mr. Bettys proceeded to his bag and took from thence a blank book, in which he commenced entering all that appeared of importance, occasionally interrogating Laborde in a careless tone, and in such a manner that it was doubtful to the latter whether the questions were made for the purpose of refreshing the lawyer's memory, or to try the consistency of his own tale. "Well, sir," presently he continued, having finished his entry, "could you tell me the name of the gentleman whom you mentioned to me a short time since, and who noticed to you the disorder you were in?"

"He is a surgeon, of the name of Harris, and resides in the High Street."

"I suppose when he inquired how you came in such a state, you gave to him the same account as you have given to myself and to the innkeeper?"

"I did," replied Laborde, "that is, as far as my memory serves me at the present time; I am not aware nor recollect that I made the least deviation from the actual truth, or variation in

the description. But I was so agitated at the period that I cannot speak to a certainty."

"That is fortunate, since his testimony will go far to corroborate that of the other witness, and upon the whole I see at present no reason to fear anything disagreeable from the occurrence. The worst that you can possibly expect will be a verdict of manslaughter; but I, for my part, consider nothing but a verdict of justifiable homicide can be returned. You are quite certain that one pistol was discharged at you, and that it was loaded with ball?"

"That one pistol was fired by my adversary I can most positively declare; and my firm conviction also is that it was with the design to deprive me of life, for I heard the ball whistle close to my head; and it was on that account, that when I perceived him, as I imagined, seeking for another to repeat his attempt, that I conceived it would be my duty to defend myself, and hinder his design."

"I can easily settle this point myself by examining the weapon which is undischarged. I

suppose, even if we had time, that it would be useless to follow up investigating too closely who the man is; for if we were to discover, your bounty might be taxed with the expense of a highwayman's family, and they very frequently have large ones, which would constitute a heavy drag upon your purse and liberality."

Again Laborde felt abashed, but hastily answering, he said,

"I wish to heaven I could discover any relatives of the man, for I might then be able to be of service to them."

"Your wish is both highly creditable, and much to be commended; though, as a friend to your interests, I must observe that it ought not to be gratified. Excuse me, sir, but I must now be going, both to obtain apartments and to prosecute enquiries you have been unable to make. I shall, however, be with you again towards evening."

Saying this Mr. Bettys arose, and bidding Laborde farewell for the present, carefully carried his bag with him himself, to the great

disappointment of Mary, who had hoped she might obtain some insight into its contents. He entered the chaise, and was once again whirled to the hotel, whose doors he had passed with such little ceremony about an hour before. The officious little waiter was at his post, and in less than twenty minutes Mr. Bettys' baggage, alias certain articles which we will not pry into, tied up in one single handkerchief, and the all important blue bag, were duly installed, the latter, however, being for better security placed under lock and key. Having summoned the landlord, and obtained from him all the information that he could furnish, he provided himself with a guide, and commenced making a tour of the town, examining and questioning all who could possess any knowledge which might affect his client either favorably or prejudicially.

But we must leave him to continue his perambulation, and return to Laborde, to whom the visit of Mr. Bettys had been the cause of much disquiet. He felt almost convinced that he was suspected, or rather that the shrewd lawyer placed

far from implicit confidence in his tale; but the remembrance now struck him that he had been addressed by his assumed name, and he considered it would appear strange to a man in Mr. Bettys' position, that it should be preserved to him; as in all probability his agent had informed him of the change. Laborde now argued with himself whether it would not be the more prudent plan at once to reveal himself, at least as far as regarded his true appellation, reserving to himself his reasons for dropping it. Since if it were to come out on the enquiry, it might not only cause great embarrassment to the lawyer, but give occasion for unfavourable impressions upon the minds of those who had to judge him. Whilst he was thus pondering, he felt a gentle touch upon his shoulder, and looking up he encountered the eyes of Alice, beaming with all the love and tenderness of which a woman is capable.

"Dear Henry," she said, "I have been waiting for you a long time; I thought you would have come to me when the stranger was gone."

"Do you really think, Alice, I have nothing

else to do? or that my time hangs so very heavy upon my hands that I must of necessity waste it in idle dalliance with you?"

"Henry," she said reproachfully; "there was a time you told me differently: you said, and I think I remember rightly, that you desired naught but some dwelling far removed from the noisy haunts of men, where you might rest for ever at the feet of Alice."

"Mere, nonsense," replied Laborde, unfeelingly, "mere boyish enthusiasm. You were ridiculously credulous to attach so much importance to the mere words of passion."

"Henry, is this from you?" said Alice, the moisture suffusing her eyes. "I should have thought the sacrifices I have made would have secured me some small continuance of your fickle love."

"Well," said Laborde a little touched, and for the moment repenting him of his harshness. "What would you have? Am I not continually with you? could I be more so? Have not I—in whose veins flows some of the noblest and

purest blood of France—have not I descended from the state which it was mine by birth to occupy? Have not I concealed my unblemished name, and more than all, have I not degraded myself by receiving wages of the clownish Englishmen? For whom have I done all this? It is for you, and yet you are not content, not satisfied, with the humiliation and abasement I am hourly compelled to endure; you complain that my attentions are not sufficient, and speak of your own sacrifices as if I had made none."

"Your sophistry, Henry," said Alice calmly, "cannot deceive me; in doing what you have just now enumerated you have but consulted your own inclinations; and whatever you have done has been entirely for your own pleasure. You loved me once I own; but now, Henry, your cold, nay repulsive, behaviour at times tells me but too truly, and too plainly that I am becoming to you both stale and nauseous, nay, even sometimes I fear you view me with disgust."

"Well, be it so if you like it; we will not quarrel about a word or the application of a term:

and I am glad you have first opened a very disagreeable business to both parties. Since you have such doubts of my affection, what say you to returning to the house of Mr. Cunningham; I have no doubt but that he would hail you with pleasure, and greet you with every affection."

"And are my worst suspicions indeed so very soon to be verified," Alice exclaimed almost hysterically. "No, sir," she continued, calling to her aid the native dignity of her sex, "no, sir, although no father's blessing ratified my act, and though the holy sanction of the church was wanting, yet do I consider ourselves to be as firmly and indissolubly joined as though we had knelt together before the altar; nor can aught ever separate us save the icy hand of death; were it fated that his freezing breath should first fall upon you, Alice would not long survive to bear the taunts of a cold and heartless world, that knows not what it is to love as I have done. In place, Henry, of making this unkind and ungenerous proposition, rather throw off this disguise as hateful to myself as it is to you. Make me

the only reparation now in your power, let us return to him who has ever been to me a father, and hope that through the friendship of his son Vincent—"

"Ah," exclaimed Laborde suddenly, whilst a shudder ran through his frame, "never mention his name again to me. Now go, I expect a gentleman this evening and we must be private; you can go to your room and meditate on what I have said."

"Oh, Henry, stop, recall those words; surely you cannot, you do not mean—you only spoke to try my affections; come, Henry, smile, kiss me."

The events of the few last days had seared the heart of Laborde: murder had curdled in his breast and formed a coat of adamant around his heart, against which the shafts of love struck vainly, and from which they were turned aside. He pushed her rudely from him, and commanded her in an imperative manner to be gone; she complied, and quitted the room, with a weight of grief that not even the mass which pressed the ancient monsters could equal.

Laborde was alone, and passed his time canvassing and considering his future conduct, and how far it was prudent to place himself in the power of Mr. Bettys. Having arranged this, his thoughts, following up the range of ideas thus started, proceeded to analyse his present position. He thought of Alice, but she appeared to him as the guilty cause of the crime he had committed. He argued, had he never known her, or had she never yielded to his solicitations, he should never have fallen into his present embarrassment. Laborde's mind was impatient, fond of novelty and excitement. All these passions had now been fully gratified; he was heartily tired and ennuyed of the life he was now leading: he longed to rejoin his equals: to be again placed in a position in which he might distinguish himself, or at least be free; and he viewed Alice as the obstacle to these wishes; the clog and the fetters which restrained and tied him down, compelling him to be stationary.

The idea of deserting Alice had more than once presented itself to his mind, but he feared

that, should he do so, she might follow him, and the affair becoming generally known, would be conveyed to the ears of his guardian, and immediately cause the latter to withdraw from him all countenance and even support; for his father in his will, had given so much power, to his protector, over his fortune which he could not inherit until his twenty-fifth year, that in case of his conduct proving displeasing, all, with the exception of a small portion which was entailed, could be passed from the inheritance of the son, to a nephew, and he himself, would be thus almost reduced to beggary. His spirit revolted from this, that he, who had always entertained the highest hopes and expectations should thus come to want, and his name be disgraced; he would almost as soon have endured the tortures of hell itself. But how could he escape, how get rid of the connexion without his guardian discovering it. He now remembered the words of Alice, "Nor can aught ever separate us but the icy hand of death." What demon is that which now whispers in his soul! The idea is too horrible, he sought to dis-

miss the unholy thought; yet, in spite of his endeavours the phantom still hovered about. It now assumed a kindlier aspect, death might select her as its victim without his interference. He breathed less hard; it seemed as though the absence of the more criminal thought had lightened his bosom; when suddenly, as if to accuse him for indulging it, a stunning rap upon the door fell upon his ear.

Starting from his chair he listened, almost tremblingly, but he was presently re-assured by hearing the now well-known voice of his lawyer, and in a few minutes that gentleman made his appearance.

After the first greetings were over, Laborde enquired of him the result of his labours, and Mr. Bettys replied,

"If I were sanguine before I quitted you, I feel doubly so at present; at first sight there was what, at the time, I did not like to inform you of, namely a shade of doubt as to the event, to be cast over your case, and which, had I done so, or explained it to you, might have caused both

alarm and uneasiness; but this has been entirely removed, and in the whole course of my professional experience, I have never met with a case where the verdict to be pronounced, could so clearly be foretold to be justifiable homicide."

"I hope that your expectations may prove to be true," replied Laborde, who did not feel inclined to put too much faith in the present promise; as one previously given with the same assurance, had not proved to be entirely the opinion of the maker. "But perhaps you will have the kindness to explain to me more fully this new light that has been thrown upon my case, and to inform me if there is any chance of discovering the man's family; for it would be taking an immense load off my breast, were I able to be of any assistance to them."

"I will, sir, and without troubling you with regard to details, will briefly sum up the principal facts I have succeeded in gathering. In the first place, the man is a perfect stranger to every person in this town, and who he is, cannot of course

be decided; but his dress, which is exceedingly fine, though worn, as also his language, proclaim him to belong to a higher class than that which a highwayman does in general, and to hazard from these facts a guess, we might suppose him some distressed student, or some young man of good family, reduced perhaps by gambling and extravagance, to fill his pockets in a dishonest manner. It seems he put up at the Griffin, where he made enquiries if there were any Frenchmen living in or nigh the town: you were mentioned as being the only one; he immediately demanded if you were married, and was answered in the affirmative. He then asked for your description, which was also given him. He thought for some time, and then enquired your apparent circumstances; the people told him you seemed to have easy means, and to be neither rich nor poor. After a few minutes he called for his bill, settled it, and proceeded in the direction of your house. From this time nothing more was heard of him, until he was recognised as the man you unfornately slew, in protecting yourself and property."

"No letters nor papers of any description have been found upon his person, nor anything which might lead to the discovery of his identity," continued Mr. Bettys, directing a look full of meaning towards Laborde; "but," he added, "his linen is all marked with the initials V. C.; and the pistols, in place of being of a common kind, are finished with the greatest elegance."

"What you tell me," said Laborde, "certainly astonishes me. But before we enter further into the case, it may be necessary to inform you that my name is not Leprince, but Laborde. I am the younger son of a peer of France; but having formed some engagements with an English girl which were disapproved of by my family, I fled from them to this country, and allied myself to the object of my choice; deriving my support, in a great measure as you may have heard, by giving instruction in my native language to a few pupils. What cause could have led to the late disagreeable occurrence, exceeds my imagination. It hardly could have arisen from the hopes of obtaining plunder, since

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the man, as you yourself state, had been informed I was not rich; and it appeared to me, at the time, that he fired suddenly, as though he sought equally my life with my money. Now that you mention the initials upon his clothes it recalls to my recollection that I had a servant, or rather gentleman attendant in France of the name of Victor Coronde; and it seems to me the features of both were strangely similar. You know the high aristocratical pretensions of our nobility, which leads them to view with almost horror that any but those of equal blood, and purity of descent with themselves, should sit amongst them. Considering all this, is it not probable that fearful of my children claiming the rank I wish not for, and seeing no other means of breaking my connexion, or preventing the possibility of such a disgrace, some one may have hired this man to assassinate me. May not this be the cause that has given rise to the late attempt upon my life? They whom I have never sought to injure have, through mistaken pride, sought to slay me. This appears the

only means by which I can account for the attempt."

"Perhaps so," replied Mr. Bettys, whilst a smile passed over his countenance which did not seem to partake much of the character of reliance or belief, "but this would be a most wild, unconnected, and almost visionary account to lay before an English jury, to whose senses it would appear far more romantic than probable. I think they would rather ascribe it, if they were to consider it at all, as an attempt upon your life, to some relative on the lady's side rather than on your own, for the man's feature were most decidedly English. His pronunciation was far too perfect to allow of his being a foreigner; his pistols were also of English manufacture. I would advise you to make no mention of this idea of assassination. All that I consider you need say is, that you left France on account of some family quarrel. Your behaviour, since you have been in this place will immediately suggest itself to the jury, who will be chosen from the neighbourhood, as having been both steady and

industrious. But, sir, excuse my asking the question, are you positively married to the young lady whom you just now mentioned? Your answer to this question may materially assist the elucidation of your case."

"Suppose," enquired Laborde, in a quiet manner, as though he were considering his reply, "suppose the same question is put to me on the inquest, and I were to answer it in the affirmative?"

"Then your certificate, or some other proof, would be required."

"Suppose they were lost, mislaid, and that I could produce no other evidence but my bare word to vouch for the ceremony having been performed, it having been consummated after the Catholic manner, and whilst I was in France?"

"Then, sir, I am afraid your assertion would neither be considered as sufficient, nor admitted; and thus one part of your statement being of a hesitating nature, a shade of suspicion would be cast over the remainder."

"If my reply were to be negative, and that

the marriage was never consummated in a regular manner, or after any Church forms?"

"Sir," replied Mr. Bettys, in a tone of voice which implied he was not at all best pleased, "You are acting towards me both foolishly and ungenerously; foolishly, since, without proper information, how can I meet the contingencies of your case? If you do not clearly explain to me everything I ask you, or withhold matters of importance for me to be acquainted with, I will not be answerable for the consequences. How could I conduct your case blindfolded through the intricate and perplexing mazes of the law? If I enter the court imperfectly acquainted with the details of what, in all probability, will be the leading features of your case, the result may be most disadvantageous to you; since, but excite the national pride and prejudices of your judges, which you can easily do, being a foreigner, by making them imagine you are striving to deceive them, they will immediately become severe and the enquiry stricter; and you best know," he continued with emphasis, "how you

could bear the searching investigation of the sessions. You are acting towards me ungenerously, since if from misinformation I should be led into confusion, it would become a blow to my professional reputation. But what cause have you which deters you from replying to my question?"

"You are mistaken," replied Laborde hurriedly; 'you are mistaken if you imagine I wanted to deceive you. And let me tell you, sir," he continued, with hauteur, "that did I not know the motives which gave rise to your insinuation against my honour were from the most laudable design for my own benefit, I should notice them in another manner. The reason that I had for replying to your question as I did was to understand more fully all the circumstances of my case, so that I might not be surprised were the same to be put to me hereafter; but since you desire such a direct and concise reply, I am not married."

"Well, sir, I hope you will take no offence if my eagerness to serve you has betrayed me into

some heat. I think if the same question should be put to you on the inquest, it would be better to answer it in the affirmative, and aver that the ceremony took place in France. I will attend to what other questions may follow."

"I should feel obliged to you," replied Laborde; "but can you tell me when this disagreeable surveillance, under which I am at present, and which is excessively irksome, will terminate?"

"It will not last beyond the inquest, if the verdict be as I both hope and expect it will. But time flies, and there is still much to be done on the morrow, and I must retire early to be enabled to get through with it."

Rising, he bade Laborde adieu. Soon after the latter himself retired to rest, and his example was presently followed by the whole, or nearly so, of the inhabitants of the little town, whose repose was as heavy as their minds were generally light; since but few were the cares to oppress this small community. Here and there, it is true, the faintly illuminated window told that in this house sickness abode, and it might be

that the dark angel was even at that moment hovering over the dwelling, waiting but to receive the word to stop the breath of the fever-tormented patient.

A little further on the sound of revelry and merry laugh told that therein a joyous feast is held; yet, upon the morrow these may share the damp and clayey bed of many who have preceded them. What a blessing is our ignorance of futurity! Say, would one of that happy crew now smile if he knew that it were but the prelude to the vacant grin of death.

On the following day Mr. Bettys called upon Laborde, but he communicated nothing of importance, and now the latter looked forward to that which was to succeed, with considerable anxiety: since it was to him indeed one upon which the fortunes of Cæsar were cast; it might either plunge him into a dungeon and rivet the iron fetters upon his legs, under a charge the most hateful alike to God and man—that of murder: or, cleared from all imputation, he might be enabled to hold up his head as apparently free

from crime as any of the numerous saints so often met with, whose vices are so seldom suspected, until themselves have passed away; and then a new generation wonders how easily its fathers could have been imposed upon, and regards their credulity with astonishment.

Friday, the day appointed for the inquest arrived and both Laborde and Mr. Bettys duly attended. It will be useless to trouble the reader with uninteresting details, and it will suffice to say Mr. Bettys well sustained the reputation he had earned, and though upon enquiries such as the present, it is not permitted for any one to address the jury, yet he contrived by his occasional observations, sometimes directed to the coroner, sometimes to the various witnesses, to elicit the most favourable evidence for Laborde, and in placing the latter in the fairest point of view for an English jury, by enlisting upon his side their pity and their sympathies; representing the Frenchman to be among the most unhappy of men; persecuted in his own country, his

ill-fortune had followed him to that which he had made his asylum.

Then he drew attention to the attempt of the man upon his client's life, the necessity of the latter, allowed in all countries, to act in self-defence, and not permit himself quietly and unresistingly to be shot. One pistol loaded with ball had already been fired, a second was about to be discharged, when he struck his adversary a blow which unhappily took too much effect. Through Boniface he showed Laborde's grief for what he had been compelled to do in self protection and through stern necessity; he proved his anxiety to obtain help to be of service to the man, and if possible to preserve him, and such was his desire, when he had procured it, to be quickly and hastily upon the spot, that though he could but ill afford it, he preferred the chance of saving the man who had sought his life, to delaying for a few minutes to obtain the change for a guinea; and which, as Mr. Bettys observed, showed a kind and forgiving spirit towards one who had

sought to deprive him of one of the greatest of the gifts of the Divinity. And finally he asked the question, what Englishman could punish a man for acting courageously ?

He succeeded admirably, and the whole of the jury became inclined to view Laborde's conduct not only as being perfectly innocent, but most praiseworthy. The coroner, even in his zeal for justice, embraced his cause most warmly; for having learnt whilst at school a few words of French, and actuated by the love of display which the human heart possesses in a very high degree, whenever one of the jury wished to address himself to Laborde, he immediately constituted himself interpreter, and delivered the question in his own Gallic, and after his own manner of pronunciation. Thus in excellent humour with himself from this opportunity of impressing upon his auditors his erudition, he even passed some encomiums upon the bravery and christianity of the Frenchman; how far they were deserved the reader is a much better judge.

Having thanked the jury for their consideration of his case, Laborde retired from the Court, accompanied by the applause of the fickle multitude who had come to witness the proceedings, and who would have been just as happy to have exercised their vocal powers in an opposite manner had he been condemned.

Laborde on his way home was profuse in his thanks to Mr. Bettys, and asked the lawyer to dine with him. But the latter thanking him for his proffered hospitality, declined, alleging, in excuse, important business which required his presence in town without delay, "but," he continued carelessly, "I will send you my bill of costs which you can look over, and settle at your pleasure, or when it is most convenient to you. I always consider what concerns business is better quickly arranged."

Highly delighted at the successful termination of his adventure, which might have taken a course as opposite and disagreeable to him as possible, Laborde entered his house, and Alice having inquired the result, and what had passed

he told her all that had occurred as he remembered it. And so happy did he feel, that for the time, his affection returned with all its former violence; and so contrary is man, that he even now embraced with emotions of love, her whom a few hours before he had wished he were for ever and eternally separated from. Yet his present love had its origin from the same source as his former hate. He then had looked upon her as the cause of his misery, and of his hazardous and dangerous position; he now regarded her as the cause of his present joy, and of the honours his unworthy action had gained.

He was seated on a sofa playing with the ringlets of Alice when the servant entered with a letter, which from a certain tendency to bulge, and a little dirt at either of the extremities, seemed to have undergone the operation of being pryed into. She delivered it to Laborde, who opened it, wondering from whom and whence it could have arrived. But soon his doubts were all set at rest by the threatened "bill of costs" revealing itself to view. Never was any one more

surprised at the enormous length to which these little bills do sometimes attain. The items, such as travelling expenses, postage, visits, hotel payments, disbursements, &c., appeared in fearful array. He looked at the bottom where the sum total was expressed, and four hundred and fifty pounds met his eye. Laborde, thoroughly astonished and confounded, sent to demand an interview, without delay, with Mr. Bettys and that gentleman promptly obeyed the summons, for expecting it he had kept himself in readiness, and in a short time was once again with Laborde, in the old sitting room.

"To what," enquired Laborde, addressing him as soon as he entered, whilst with the anger and surprise expressed in his voice there was a mixture of fear; for the bad reputation of lawyers' bills was no stranger to him, "To what am I to ascribe this?" pointing to the bill. "Am I to consider it merely as a joke, or as an infamous attempt at imposition?"

"Sir," replied Mr. Bettys; "when I seemed to doubt your tale the other day you imme-

diately took fire. Am I not also entitled to feel offended, since after having in the most successful manner conducted your case, you turn round and accuse me of an infamous attempt at imposition? This language, sir, is really most ungrateful and an ill return for my services."

"But have I not cause? what is this? Do you mean to declare that your passage down from London has cost you upwards of fifty pounds, and that it will cost you the same back? It is monstrous; its object is palpable. Do you mean to assert that your expenses each day have amounted to twenty pounds, or that you have paid—"

"Sir," said Mr. Bettys, interrupting him with an apparent air of candour, whilst a smile of conscious triumph and superiority lit up his countenance, "I have acted towards you throughout both fairly and honorably; nor have I at present any desire to lose the character to which I am certain I may justly lay claim. Here, you may take my bill; assess it at any sum that may appear suitable to you, and I feel

certain that you will scarce make the least reduction."

"I will certainly do so with pleasure," replied Laborde, who felt considerably easier from the accommodating spirit displayed by his lawyer; and taking pen and paper he soon reduced the charges to about thirty pounds, and then thought he made a very good compensation for the services he received.

Whilst he was thus engaged, Mr. Bettys, taking a newspaper from his pocket, read some paragraph to himself, and then walked to the window, where he amused himself by whistling an air, and scrutinising each passer-by.

"I have finished," said Laborde, presenting his work to Mr. Bettys; "and again must I give you my hearty thanks for the skilful manner in which you have conducted my case; and if I could afford it, there is no sum which I should consider too large to recompense you with."

The lawyer took the paper, and looking down it, observed with a contemptuous sneer:

"There is one thing you have omitted. Allow me to insert it?"

And taking the pen in his hand, he wrote:

"To saving from gallows..... £420."

"What is this?" said Laborde, a sickly feeling of apprehension crawling over him even to hear the answer to the question he had himself put. "What is this? Do you mean to infer that my deliverance from the late slight suspicion, if it can be so called, was entirely owing to you, and that my innocence went for nothing? There are hundreds of others who would have done the very same without making one tittle of this parade of their services. I really cannot understand your meaning, unless as a base attempt to extort money; and my being a foreigner I suppose gives you hopes of success; but you shall not, for I will instruct my agent that he may take proceedings for my protection from such an infamous imposition."

"You can do as as you please," replied Mr. Bettys; "but if you require from me an explanation of what I have written, it is easily given,

for it amounts simply to this: Did you ever know a young man of the name of Vincent Cunningham?"

"Good God!" exclaimed Laborde, and all his strength appeared to have quitted him.

"And allow me," Mr. Bettys continued, "allow me to ask you a question. When did you last meet with or see this young man? Is it a long period, or only a very few days back?"

"Fiend!" exclaimed Laborde, darting at Mr. Bettys, "whence did you know this?"

"Hands off! and please to keep your distance, or I may become the subject for a charge of felony, or of housebreaking. If you desire to know whence I derive my information, I have no objection to let you—you can listen."

And opening the paper he had brought with him, Mr. Bettys read:

"Whereas, Mr. Vincent Cunningham, having been long absent from his family, whoever can give any positive information concerning him will be amply rewarded."

"Well, sir," continued Mr. Bettys, "you may

perceive that I am no conjuror, for to speak plainly what is contained here, your own mystery, prevarication, and frequent confusion, first led me to doubt your tale; and now your manner in place of denying, fully admits the truth of my charge, and strengthens my preconceived suspicions, so much as to make them amount to certainties. Have you any objection now to my claims on the score of value? A peer of France can never be straightened for so small a sum; and I think you need only apply to your agent, and he would immediately furnish you with such a trifle."

"By heavens," exclaimed Laborde, astonished at the coolness of the other, "by heavens, you are the greatest villain that I ever remember meeting with."

"It is the misfortune," replied Mr. Bettys smiling ironically, "it is the misfortune of our business to consort with villains, and," he continued, looking towards Laborde expressively, "sometimes our brighter metal gets tarnished by their baseness."

Laborde bit his lips, and replied, restraining his feelings with admirable control, "it is enough; supposing I were to pay you this, how know I that you will preserve silence; or that having received your legal charges, or price of secresy—for it matters not which you call it—how shall I be able to secure myself from your betrayal; or from the fate I have avoided?"

"You have my interest as your guarantee; for did I so, my professional name would receive a blow which would injure me far more than your betrayal would serve. I do not wish to press you at present; give me your note for twice the amount, on which I can demand payment when you return to France, and succeed to your estates, which your agent has informed me are considerable; and I will rest content with a present sum of fifty pounds."

"I agree to it," said Laborde, to whom anything appeared preferable to the fearful fate which seemed to menace him in case of non-compliance; "make out the note as you desire, and I will place my signature. But at the same time, that I may

be guarded from your bringing it against me, and producing it as evidence of my weakness and admission of my guilt, make out your bill again, the same as before, but doubling your charges."

This Mr. Bettys soon did, and everything having been ratified, he departed for his own house of business, once more to sow dissension among families, and rudely to break asunder the holiest bonds of friendship.

CHAPTER V.

"And woman! if frailty be thy name
Enduring love is also thine;
'Neath ev'ry sun, in every clime,
Whereso'er thou'rt found, thou art still the same.

"Nought doth as woman's love endure nor lasts,
Nor hardest stone, nor mountain pine.
One crumbleth to the hand of time;
The other's torn by the rude whirlwind's blast

"Calm, placid, mild, her heart can bear each shock,
And lasting through the lapse of years,
The flower of love its head still rears,
And shames with its age time's yielding rock."

LABORDE now breathed more freely; a vast weight had been taken off his bosom, and with the departure of the lawyer, the only hand that could point him out as a murderer, appeared withdrawn, whilst the knowledge of his crime seemed to be preserved from all chances of disclosure. Still,

occasionally, a fear would arise; a doubt, an uncertainty as to how far it was probable his secret would be kept by Mr. Bettys. At times he felt distrustful that a larger sum than he had paid to obtain from the latter his silence might procure the betrayal of himself, and then he shuddered at the prospect of a public execution. Though at any moment for the most trivial circumstance he was perfectly ready to have periled his life, yet he trembled at the idea of an ignominious death.

Meanwhile days and weeks passed by, yet nothing came to warrant his apprehension, and left to the idle employment of his thoughts, his mind again reverted to his resolution of breaking his connexion with Alice, which he considered as restraining him from following the bent of his own inclinations, and binding him for ever to the yoke of servitude.

Thus actuated, his conduct became each day more morose, and his manner unkinder towards the unhappy victim of his arts. He no longer disliked, he positively loathed her; her very pre-

sence was hateful to him. He no longer viewed her with apathy, but aversion. Each act of hers he commenced to regard with suspicion. He judged her by the standard of his own breast—himself deceitful, he fancied she must be the same. Did she seek by any of the endearments of her sex to win him back to her, it appeared but as the arts of a guileful woman to obtain from his weakness the Church's sanction to their union. Did she weep, unable to bear his taunts and sarcasms, they were but crocodile tears she shed, devoted to the attainment of the same end; each moment he found something to embitter his hatred. His resolve was taken, and as she refused to separate from him, he determined to abandon her, although such a proceeding might draw upon him the displeasure of his guardian, for anything almost appeared preferable to the life he was then leading. Writing to his agent, he desired him to procure a berth in the first vessel that should sail for the Canadas.

The soul of Alice had lately become the receptacle of a fearful and horrid suspicion. The

paper in which the reward was offered for information concerning her kinsman, and which Mr. Bettys had read to Laborde, had fallen in her way, and the paragraph had met her eye. The confusion of the latter, whenever the name of Vincent was uttered, coupled with words that he occasionally dropped, together with what had transpired on the inquest, though to an unconcerned spectator they might have appeared remote and without connection, yet to her formed a chain of evidence to confirm the idea that he whom she loved had been guilty of the foulest crime, and prompted by her affection, she already began to experience alarm lest his act should be discovered. Hence, it was not without considerable pleasure that she heard him announce his intention of proceeding to America, where she hoped that, if her fears were correct, he would at least be secure from punishment. For still her love, as some majestic ship that is securely holden to the ground, rides fast and safe, though assailed by every adverse gale, remained unchanged and un-

diminished amid the tempest of coldness, reproach, and taunting epithets.

The hour was late when Laborde thus declared his future movements, and she, concealing her joy, replied—

"It is the same to me, Henry. With you all places are alike, and I shall be as happy amid the silent woods, if you be nigh, as I could be even among all the pleasures of society."

"Are you resolved then, girl, ever to torment me?" enquired Laborde with passion. "Shall I never be able to consider myself free? Wherever I go am I still to be cursed by your presence—to have my mirth checked by your simulated sadness; and my sorrows, should I have any, rendered doubly poignant by your feigned attempts at consolation? Am I never to accomplish the bright visions of glory I had formed on account of your continually darkening the scene? Will you never learn to know I care not for you; that I consider your very companionship a disgrace? I thought you purposed returning to Mr. Cunningham's, and believe me—"

"Never!" Alice replied, with all the firmness in her tone that the choking sadness produced by the confession she had just heard would permit. "Never, so long as life remains, can we be separate. Henry, did you know my heart, you would see there a still stronger tie that binds me now to thee. An inward monitor informs me that ere long my presence, now so hateful, will be necessary to the safety of your very life, and that to my exertions you will be indebted—"

"What mean you?" said the Frenchman, interrupting, and directing an uneasy and suspicious glance towards her. "Are you foolish, or has any of the wandering gipsy tribe been pouring his veracious predictions into your too credulous ear: or perhaps you have discovered some plot on the part of Mary to hurry me to eternity because I refused to increase the slattern's wages?"

"It is neither," replied Alice, unheeding the searching look and sneering tone of her questioner. "In your own bosom have you no cause for apprehension? In mine, Henry, there is

some horrid doubt—fears that I would not whisper lest the wind should betray them to other ears. I would that they be groundless, but if they prove otherwise, you will yet find a woman's counsel of value in your hour of need."

"Speak; I would fain know what fearful secret of mine own can have come into your keeping. You may safely trust your voice to utter it. I will answer for there being but one auditor," said the Frenchman, in vain attempting to dissemble his anxiety that betrayed itself in spite of his jeering tone.

After a pause of a few minutes, Alice replied:

"Henry, I may not and I ought not to keep anything concealed from you; but if my suspicions should be false, oh! forgive their imagination when you must remember it was my love that first gave rise to them. I fear—I dread, and the thought has made me wretched for many days and nights now past—"

"Be silent!" exclaimed Laborde, who divining

what he was about to hear, looked round him in alarm, lest the thought that trembled upon his companion's lips should have been conveyed to any previously unobserved witness; and then he continued in an affected tone of anger, "is it thus you requite the protection I have afforded you, by all but uttering the foulest aspersions upon my honour. Is it thus you would blacken me by an accusation of the deepest dye, and then forsooth preface your insult by a request for its pardon? It required but this to fill up the measure of your ingratitude."

"Oh! Laborde," said Alice, terrified at his sudden and violent passion, "surely you will not withhold your pardon for what I have not as yet spoken? I know—I feel certain now that I was wrong. You are—"

"Forgive!" cried her deceiver, with well feigned tones of offence. "Can you ask?—can you expect such a thing? By the hell beneath, I verily believe you would play me as falsely with your person as you have attacked me with

your tongue. Away with you, your sight is hateful to me; I will not listen to you."

"Never, till thou hast unsaid that. Never, till thou dost retract those words. On my knees," she continued, sinking into that suppliant posture, and taking him by the skirt of the robe he wore, "I beseech you."

"Unhold me!" the Frenchman exclaimed, grasping her by the wrist.

"Not until you have unsaid that."

Laborde replied not, but dashed her hand away; she fell, striking her head with force upon the ground where she lay senseless, the blood flowing from the effects of the blow.

The Frenchman gazed for an instant, and then raising, placed her on a sofa, whilst he muttered.

"She is not slain; so much the better; but if she endure this, fiends you must aid me to somewhat else."

Proceeding to the door, he summoned the servant, whom he directed to attend upon her mis-

tress, who had injured herself by a fall, whilst he went in search of a surgeon.

A few days succeeding the above, Laborde received a letter from Mr. Bettys, in which the latter, on account of "an unexpected pecuniary pressure," desired the favour of a small amount of money. This request was complied with, but without seeming to have much effect in diminishing "the pressure" of the lawyer, for shortly afterwards the Frenchman obtained a second communication from the same quarter, and of the same purport as the preceding.

From this time forth Laborde was continually receiving applications from his legal friend, which, whilst they increased in the sums they required, anything but diminished in frequency.

At last a demand for a considerably larger amount than he well could afford, compelled him to return a negative to the lawyer's importunities, and he considered he might now safely dare the other's anger, since a communication from his agent informed him that the vessel in which his

passage had been procured was alone awaiting him to join, that it might proceed upon its voyage.

Scarce had the messenger gone, that bore his reply, than the Frenchman commenced his preparations for departure. There was not much that required to be done, and in a couple of hours with the assistance of Alice, all was complete. The few bills paid, and adieux said, to the still less number of friends.

Although travelling at the period of our tale, throughout the extent of our Island was conducted with anything but the speed of the present day, and though the roads were rougher, and subject to many more interruptions than in these modern days of improvement; yet gold was as omnipotent then as now, and Laborde saw with exultation, the goal of his wishes approach. But two stages now separated him from Portsmouth, and from whence the deceitful brine would bear upon its bosom, one as treacherous as itself. Horses were wanting to complete that distance, and against his will, he was constrained to delay until their arrival, at a small inn.

Throughout the journey, many had been the harsh expressions addressed by the Frenchman towards his companion. These the latter had borne in silence, but now, from the fatigue she had undergone, for unaccustomed to much exertion, the incessant exercise of near two days' travel, had completely overcome her, and given a greater weight to the remembrance of his unkindness, she sunk upon a seat and burst into tears.

"What now?" said Laborde, looking up from a book, with which he was seeking to divert himself as her hysteric sobs met his ear, "Have you no other means of amusement, but to annoy me with your weeping."

"I feel most unhappy," replied Alice, burying her face in her hands; "Henry, you are indeed too cruel to me."

"Cruel! pshaw, I am far too indulgent. By Heavens, I do not believe there is another man would permit you to give way to each whim and phantasy, as I do."

"Phantasy!" she said in a melancholy tone,

"would that all the words I have heard you utter, indicators of ceased affection, had no stronger being than is conveyed by that term."

"On my soul, Alice, you are too provoking; if my words displease you, why bid me repeat them: had you done as I desired, you never would have heard more of them; had you not been with me, and I cursed by the malignancy of your attendant star, this delay never would have occurred."

"Truly," said Alice sighing, "do you say the malignancy of my star; its influence has ever been to cast shadows upon my path."

"It is a vast pity your inclinations have afforded it aid; I suppose when you were weak enough to give credence to my vows, its malevolence was in operation," observed the traitor with an affected tone of commiseration. "Hist!" he exclaimed, as the sound of horses' feet met his ear, "thank Heaven, we shall now proceed." But his congratulation was not for long, and presently he turned pale as he heard a voice enquiring for himself, the tones of which he imme-

diately recognised; in a few minutes Mr. Bettys, followed by two rough-looking men, entered the apartment, and saluting him with mock civility, addressed him.

"I am sorry that you have been delayed, but I have two horses below which are at your service, and as soon as you are willing, we will travel together."

Laborde replied, attempting to conceal the apprehension that infected him, and assuming as cold a tone of politeness as possible,

"I am afraid, sir, my carriage will be unable to accommodate another; myself and wife occupy the greater part of the interior, and our baggage the remainder. Besides, perhaps our roads may be dissimilar, I am proceeding—"

"I have no doubt," said the lawyer, "that our roads will not lay very far apart; I journey to town, and I hope also in your company, for," he continued, dropping his voice and approaching closer to the Frenchman, "I have a warrant for your apprehension in my pocket."

Unable to reply, so overcome was he by this

announcement, Laborde sank into a chair, but rallying himself in the course of a few minutes, he observed in a low tone,

"This is unhandsome conduct: I thought that the members of your profession could be relied upon when purchased, but you have rifled me only to betray me."

"Hist!" said Mr. Bettys, laying his finger upon his lips and directing a glance towards his two companions, who remained standing by the door, whilst his eyes sparkled with a mixture of intelligence and cunning, "there's no necessity for matters of business becoming known. You have tried to give me the slip and get away from the bill I hold. I have but served you as you sought to do me; we shall have however sufficient time for discussion hereafter. Shall we commence our journey?"

"As you will," said Laborde rising from his seat; and re-assured by the tone and look as well as by his knowledge of the other's character. "Alice," he continued, turning towards her to whom he spoke, and who with the instinctive

feelings of love already had discovered in the strangers the verification of her fears, "Alice, this gentleman has communicated to me some important information that has completely deranged my previous plans. Will you consent to accompany me in this change of our intended route?"

"Consent to accompany you!" she replied, her blood leaping swifter at the kindly tones with which the question was asked, "I'm ready to follow wherever you go."

The party advanced towards the door and Mr. Bettys with an inclination of his head, signified to Laborde to precede him, and then making a step to one side he appeared to offer a passage to Alice, of which civility she immediately availed herself, but as she passed he endeavoured with rude familiarity to touch her hand. Unheeding him she proceeded, whilst he with a smile of malice and anger, muttered, "yes, proud one, I will bring you as low, as I will raise yonder graceless scoundrel."

Two heavy lumbering coaches were in wait-

ing, one of which had brought the Frenchman thus far, and into this Alice entered, whilst the second contained Mr. Bettys and Lahorde, the two officers that had accompanied the former being seated upon the outside.

For some time silence reigned between the occupants of the interior of the latter vehicle. The Frenchman more than once attempted to speak, but whenever he raised his eyes to do so he encountered the gaze of the lawyer fixed upon him with a triumphant expression, and his words died on his lips in spite of his efforts to utter them, whilst his agitation, to the diversion of his companion, each moment visibly increased as the valuable minutes sped by. At last however he observed, "you must have travelled very swiftly to overtake me; how did you discover the road on which I had gone?"

Mr. Bettys, who until now had been been enjoying the confusion of his prisoner, replied, "I rode for my bill. It was your acceptance spurred my horse, and as to your last question, if you will take a lawyer's advice never again

employ as your agent a garrulous old man who can so easily be prevailed upon to show his correspondents' letters, as is yours. A communication of your own that I saw in his possession, has for some time rendered me perfectly acquainted with the plan you meditated."

"I have acted incautiously," said the Frenchman, with an affectation of candour, "we have both attempted to play with each other, and I have been unsuccessful."

A smile crossed the countenance of the lawyer, as though he detected the purpose of his companion, and he replied:

"Perhaps you speak only of your own designs. Mine have ever been most upright."

"Then wherefore," enquired Laborde, "after having taken a considerable sum from me, do you draw upon me the eye of that power you once so successfully blinded?"

Again Mr. Bettys smiled, and then said, in apparent ignorance of the question the other was desirous of opening:

"My duty has long been in opposition to my

inclination, but my conduct was at last determined by the earnest appeals of a father desirous of obtaining information concerning his son. My friendship for you caused me to yield to his solicitations with considerable reluctance."

"I thought," observed Laborde, "that you informed me I was secure in your integrity, from your interest requiring you to be faithful, but you do not appear to have hesitated much in retracting your pledge. I suppose the real truth is, Mr. Cunningham paid you a larger amount for my secret than you imagined you could procure from me for its preservation."

"No, sir," replied the lawyer with offended pride, "I am not so easily to be made a traitor. When you formed the intention of deceiving me I merely secured myself. Still, however," he continued, assuming a tone of regret, "I should be grieved to see you suffer the rigours of the law through my agency."

"Be frank with me," said the Frenchman, who was desirous of coming speedily to some understanding, and who regarded each moment

as it passed as bringing him nearer to a prison, "what sum was it that so strongly excited your sympathy. Might not your passions, if I offer to double the amount, be engaged upon my side."

"A thousand guineas has been offered for any clear evidence touching the young man—"

"And I offer you two, one-third to be payable by my agent the instant I am on ship-board, and the remainder in six months, by myself, when I shall come into possession of my property."

"No, sir, I cannot accept your proposition," replied Mr. Bettys, after a minute's reflection, and the coolness of his tone was in striking contrast to the hurried utterance of the other. "You see that I am under engagement to forward the ends of justice, I cannot with consistency nor honour undertake to frustrate such ends."

Laborde readily comprehended the delicate susceptibility of his fellow traveller, and for the purpose of removing what it put forth in the shape of objections, said:

"I imagine, sir, that you have taken an en-

tirely erroneous view of the question. Your honour is rather concerned in my escape than otherwise, since you have already received from me considerable sums for that purpose. Will it not rather appear that you were more desirous of fleecing than of bringing me to justice, if you place me within her authority? I know this service I require of you is one that might expose you; but to cover you from all chance and liability, I will double the sum I have already mentioned."

"You have stated your case very strongly," replied Mr. Bettys, his eyes sparkling with an expression the Frenchman could not comprehend. "I have never viewed it in this light before, and I confess that you have entirely changed my opinions. You have observed most truly that if my assistance to you should be discovered, I should be exposed for conniving at your escape. Thus my inclination and friendship for you incline me one way, whilst prudence points out another. Again, after all my hazard I may not obtain a fair remuneration. True, I may be

secure of the money that your agent holds, but of the remainder I am not so certain. You may forget the value of what I have performed, and when it shall be in your power to requite, you may no longer remember the obligation."

"I pledge you, on my honour, that you shall have no cause to complain of my liberality," said Laborde with earnestness.

An expression slightly denoting incredulity in the other's asseveration crossed the mouth of the lawyer as he replied, "No doubt, sir, you would behave most fairly, but it is unfortunately our plan of conducting business never to trust to our clients' honor; for observation has proved to us that honourable obligations are most frequently dishonoured. Being a foreigner in this country, I should find it impossible to compel you to take your bills up. If you will give me a power of attorney to your agent, authorising him to raise the sum you mentioned on your account, and to deliver it into my hands then may we each see our way clearly."

As may have been observed, neither of the

negotiators was desirous of placing himself in the power of the other. Between them a mutual distrust existed, and Laborde, who was unwilling to give what the lawyer required, since the latter might obtain the money without restoring him to liberty, hesitated and said, "Were I to do this I should have no guarantee that you would observe your undertaking, and besides"—

"Cannot you drive on faster?" shouted Mr. Bettys to the postilion, who was at that very moment driving the animals that drew the vehicle to the top of their speed, without seeming to regard the Frenchman's observation. The latter read the meaning intended to be conveyed and continued:

"Then be it so; I consent. But I have with me no materials for making out what you desire, and besides, I know not the form in which you wish—"

"Leave that to me. I purpose putting up for an hour at a small road-side house, at which I will furnish you with the draft of an order

that it will be necessary for you to make a copy of."

The coach presently stopped, from which Laborde alighted, and accompanied by Alice and Mr. Bettys, he entered the inn, and was conducted into a small chamber.

The lawyer, who did not consider it would be politic to remain with his prisoner, having produced a written paper from his pocket, directed the latter to transcribe its contents and then withdrew.

Resting his head upon his hands, the Frenchman appeared overwhelmed by the event that had befallen him, and Alice, whose affection his harshness had not in the least diminished, approaching him, observed:

"Henry, do not despond; arouse yourself. Surely there is some plan by which you may effect your escape."

"Can you still love me?" enquired the Frenchman, drawing her towards him. "Indeed, Alice, this is a bitter manner by which to learn to appreciate your constancy."

"Henry, such a doubt is even more cruel than any of your past conduct," she replied, the tears overflowing her eyes with pleasure at what she regarded as a return of love, for none are so quickly deceived as an infatuated woman by the object of her passion. "But why thus let the time pass by?"

Revengeful and deceitful himself, Laborde imagined that it could be scarcely possible for Alice to have forgiven him his behaviour. He felt inclined to suspect that she was inviting him to escape for the purpose of avenging herself by thwarting the attempt. Intending to discover if this were her design, he said, taking her hand in his:

"No! I am accused of a crime, and circumstances will strangely, strongly appear against me, but of which I swear to you I am innocent. Though to remain may endanger my life, yet I cannot abandon you. Alice, fate has joined, but death alone can separate us."

"No," she said, "you must not stay. See," she continued, approaching the window, "the

height is not great. Give me your cloak and cap, I may perhaps maintain your part, and give you an opportunity of escaping."

"Can I rely upon you, Alice? You are—"

"Quick, Henry, there are none to notice you. You may cross the hedge and find some spot to conceal you until nightfall."

The window had been opened. The Frenchman was alone hanging by his hands to drop, when approaching footsteps were heard.

"They come," she said. As she spoke his hold loosened, and he fell to the ground unhurt upon his feet.

With rapidity she invested herself in his cloak, shaded her face beneath his large travelling cap, and seating herself at the table took up a pen and appeared as though writing, when the door opened. It was one of the officers. Alice, without raising her head, muttered some unintelligible words, and waved her hand to him to retire, which he, as he fancied the prisoner was secure, obeyed.

Half an hour passed, and though she was in

a continual state of alarm, yet nothing occurred to disturb her. At the expiration of that period she heard the voice of Mr. Bettys as that gentleman approached, and knowing that to attempt by any disguise to impose upon him would be vain, she dispossessed herself of her masculine attire, and retreated into a sleeping room that communicated with the one she was in. As the lawyer entered, she opened the door cautiously, and advancing lightly, pointing to the apartment she had just quitted, said, in a low tone—

"Hist! sir, he sleeps. Do not disturb him, for he appears to have been much agitated."

"You see, Madam," replied Mr. Bettys, whilst Alice sunk her eyes beneath the rude and leering nature of his look, "it is not often that we lawyers carry with us soporifics; and all our clients are not so fortunate as your friend—husband, I mean—in possessing one. I suppose this paper is for me. Ah! how is this? he scarce has written two lines."

"He was too unwell to continue," she said, with the readiness of woman's wit. "But I

beseech you not to disturb him. He will do all that is necessary when he awakes."

"I will consent," replied Mr. Bettys, with an attempt at politeness, "on your account, to postpone the period for half an hour. I cannot after that, or it will give me too dark a time to travel in," he continued, advancing towards the window, to the inexpressible alarm of Alice. "Ah! hell and furies!" he exclaimed, as the heavy mark of feet beneath met his eye, "the bird has flown!"

* * * *

The moon fell in a stream of light upon the waters of the harbour. The receding tide danced merrily in its beams and sparkled as a bed of diamonds. A splash is heard, and a boat, impelled by four oars, puts across. As each blade dips it seems to speed more swiftly along, and leaves on the field of fluid a glittering train. In the stern sat two individuals. One was muffled in a manner that would imply either a desire for disguise, or a fear of the damps of night. His companion was a female, who appeared to be

weeping on account of some harsh words he had addressed towards her. After a few minutes they drew near to a vessel, were hailed by the watch, and having replied, mounted to her deck. In the lapse of about a quarter of an hour, a shrill whistle disturbed the night, and was followed by the cries of the sailors as they labored at raising the anchor from old Neptune's couch, and presently L'Annette dropped outwards with the ebbing flood.

After a favourable passage, Laborde arrived in the Canadas, at that period belonging to the French, and having no inducement to remain in the town, after he had gone though a few ceremonies, he with Alice repaired to his estate, one of those immense landed possessions which even to this day exist, and where the lord of the soil still retains some remnant of his feudal sovereignty. At that period he not only possessed power, but frequently exercised it.

It was not long before the roving mind of the Frenchman became disgusted with the quiet that reigned everywhere. His home was disagreeable

to him, for there he encountered Alice, whose generous assistance in aiding him to escape he had forgotten almost as soon as it was rendered, and whom he now regarded with all his former dislike. Having whilst a boy had much practice with the rifle, he again amused himself with that weapon and soon recovered his former dexterity. Frequently for weeks together would he absent himself to accompany some band of Piquot hunters on their excursions, among whom by his address and presents he attained as much authority as it is possible for a stranger to possess among these jealous children of Nature.

During one of these expeditions, hearing that a prize, open to all comers, was to be contended for, he had determined to dispute its possession. This he did and succeeded. The beauty of Maria, who presided as "Queen" of the games, had, however, struck his versatile fancy, and he resolved if possible to obtain her. He remembered having heard his father speak of Major Vernon, and on the strength of this he would have introduced himself prior to the meeting we have

described, but the opportunity was wanting. Well assured was he that he could do so without danger of being repulsed, for it was not in the least probable that any eastern gale had ever wafted the tale of his misdeeds across the wide and turbulent Atlantic, or have conveyed the uninteresting rumour over the forest and the wilderness to the officer's ears; and if it had, the latter must have been, from the secluded nature of his life, but little inclined to treasure it up in his memory.

CHAPTER VI.

Riches and fame may each perform their part,
To win the way unto a woman's heart;
But if thou quickly would'st possess the prize,
Oh! haste to learn the magic power that lies
In Love's own glance. It is a furtive look,
So gentle, tender, scarce it seems to brook
Detection; yet, most strange, it will convey
More than a thousand boldest tongues could say.
The voice was still, and not a word was spoke,
But yet what eloquence the silence broke!
A tim'rous gaze; it sped into the soul
And passion's waters in wild eddies roll.

THE morn arose fair, serene, and beautiful. The birds sweetly caroled to their mates, and welcomed with their song the dispenser of life and joy, ushering in with their warbling notes the new-born day. All nature had now awakened, and then sprung forth into activity and life the denizen of the forest and the offspring of the

clearings. In every direction might be perceived parties of borderers proceeding to their different occupations, and varying in number from the lone and solitary wood-chopper to the lively and boisterous troop of hunters. Yet whatever might be their pursuits they all turned their eyes towards the house of the Major; no doubt prompted by their anxiety lest any misfortune should have occurred to it during the night; or, may be, they were desirous of taking more accurately its bearings, that they might be well acquainted with its locality should any sudden necessity of retreating there occur, for it was intended as the rallying point in case of any irruption of their savage or more civilised neighbours. All, however, withdrew their gaze with evident marks of disappointment, and for whoever or whatever it was they sought it was clear they had looked in vain.

We will not take it upon ourselves to deny but there was many a young woodsman who burned with a desire to signalize himself before the bright eyes of Maria; viewing with some dis-

pleasure a long continuance of peace that seemed to render this impossible; and how many slapped the stocks of their pieces as with sparkling eyes and throbbing and hopeful breasts they told or listened to the rumours of another threatened outbreak of war. No part of the country had been so often attacked by its enemies and defended, in imagination, by single arms against hosts as that in which Vernon resided, and many of the young men in fancy had performed actions that would have put to shame the greatest of the antique heroes.

In a new settlement the vice from which the community have least to dread contagion is sluggishness. At least, in "the fort" there were none who could indulge this propensity, for Vernon had made it a rule to allow the rising sun but to gaze a very short period upon the earth before he had himself imitated the luminary's example. Descending from his chamber, he entered that which was both called and considered the drawing room, where he found Laborde, who had preceded him, gazing ab-

stractedly upon a music book of Maria's, intended for the guitar, and on which instrument she played with skill, accompanying herself with a beautifully mellow voice. His thoughts were at the present moment occupied with his designs upon the fair possessor of the folio, in which he doubted not he would meet with success, but a remembrance of Alice crossed his mind and directly he became alarmed lest the execution of his projects should be marred by any act of hers. A malediction against her was upon his lips when its utterance was stopped by the entrance of his host.

"I perceive," said Vernon, "that you are an early riser, and by this that you are a sportsman. I do not imagine you are accustomed to allow the dew to be off the ground before you are upon it."

"I find it necessary, for unless he breathes the earliest morning air, it is but a poor chance the hunter would have of sport. To him a little morning mist is frequently most valuable, as it enables him to get at game which at other periods is too shy to be approached."

"You are right," Vernon observed. "But how is it that you have so readily fallen into the customs of the hunter? I should rather have expected to find you, at the commencement of your career, content with acquiring the legends and lore with which the forest abounds, and not to have plunged, as you appear to have done, at once into its difficulties and dangers, among which you can have had but small experience."

"I have not as yet had many to encounter; my fortune having generally been most kind and propitious; but few obstacles have been presented to blunt my vigour. Those which have crossed my path, I have been enabled to overcome by the assistance of some Indian friends whom I have succeeded in attaching to myself. With their aid, I have passed through all in a most triumphant and satisfactory manner."

"Indeed!" said the Major. "To trust myself from mere motives of pleasure among any of the natives would be more than I should like to do. But to what tribe do you refer? some

being as superior to others, as it is possible for men of the same land, and almost of the same manners and customs, to be."

"To the tribe of the Piquots," replied Laborde, "whom I consider as being superior—"

"Excuse me," said Vernon, interrupting him, "your opinion of the Piquots is entirely erroneous. During the last war they showed themselves the most bloodthirsty of any of their race, committing some of the most unheard-of cruelties, and perpetrating massacres so ruthless and unnecessary, as to cause one at times to doubt their being men endowed with feelings as ourselves, and not veritable demons. They also have the name of being as deceitful and treacherous towards their friends as they are remorseless and vindictive towards their foes. At the present period, disregarding and despising all the treaties that we have made with them, they are continually harassing us with acts of aggression, slaying our settlers who have ventured into their country; and whenever an opportunity occurs, way-laying and murdering our

trappers and hunters who, considering the different compacts would be adhered to, entered their territory. Had you mentioned the Mohawks I would have agreed with you. They possess in a high degree all those attributes we admire in the savage, in which they are superior to any of the nations on the French frontier, and more than equal to their brethren of the other tribes of the Iroquois. I had frequent opportunities of observing their courage and intelligence, and certainly must rank them far above their hereditary foes and neighbours, the Piquots; not only for Indian virtues, but for those which are generally supposed to be but rarely found amongst them, since they have a high sense of honor and fidelity, and even of justice and humanity."

"I am afraid," replied Laborde, "that your opinions as to the two tribes are vastly prejudiced; but I think I can discover whence your partiality for the one and dislike for the other arises. It is owing, I suspect, to the different positions they occupied during the war; for whilst the Piquots were ranged on the side of

France, the Mohawks were upon the side of their antagonists, and, as you have just now said, more particularly under your observation. Thus all the bravery and acts of the one are distorted into the most savage barbarity, whilst those of the others are proportionately elevated. If you heard of an attack made upon your people by Piquot warriors, you heard in the same account of the deaths of all those who were unprotected and opposed to them. The numbers of the slain, seldom diminished, would frequently be exaggerated, and many more would fall by the account, than on the field or in the dwelling attacked. This would appear to you as a massacre. But you received and hailed with joy the intelligence of a successful inroad of Mohawks, or of any of the confederated Iroquois upon us; and their equal atrocity became either veiled by their imagined gallantry, or through no positive evidence to show it. For do you think a mother's prayer, if uttered by a Frenchwoman to a Mohawk, was more attended to than that of an Englishwoman to a Piquot? Their

murders were equally appalling and brutal, but you never felt the weight of those committed by your friends, so did not perceive them. As to any humanity the Mohawks might have shown, it was never to any of their weakened and wounded adversaries, but towards your own men, whom they regarded as brothers fighting in the same cause, and to assist whom it was a sacred obligation. Thus in your ears are all the proceedings of the one formed into enormities, and the very same acts of the others, viewed on the opposite side of the canvass, are considered to have become virtues. Thus have you been led to eulogise the one and condemn the other, according as you have heard their good and evil, as performed for or against your countrymen, contrasted together."

"You are partly right, I will confess," said the Major, "and I do consider that I may have been biassed in some way by the circumstance of the Piquots being our foes. Waving for an instant my alleged superiority of the Mohawks over them, it does not lessen the hatefulness of

their character, if there be others equally cruel and ferocious with themselves. Can any palliation be offered for that bloody and useless murder of the Lawrences, a family occupying a perfectly neutral position, and prevented by their religious opinions from engaging in war, who were utterly destroyed—the babe suckling at the breast as well as matured man?"

"I really," replied Laborde, smiling, "did not intend to take up the defence of the Indian mode of warfare, as the ideas of honour, by which all combats of every description are regulated, differ in every clime and in every country, suiting themselves to the different tempers and dispositions of the inhabitants of the various parts of the globe in which they are respected. But I merely desired to maintain that the Mohawks were in no respect superior to the Piquots; but since you have thrown me down the gauntlet, I will, merely for the sake of amusement, take it up, and argue upon the side of the natives. You do not accuse them of cowardice?"

"No, I do not; but then their courage is ex-

tremely problematical; now excited, like that of all savage nations, to the height of enthusiasm, and now depressed even far below desponding. So long as success attends them, they are impetuous; but the first check cools their ardour, and a panic and dispersion usually are the effects of a second. Their courage is merely the courage of the beast; it is stained by the most inordinate thirst for blood, and though patient and watchful whilst satisfying this hateful desire, or whilst in search of food, or in seeking vengeance for injuries inflicted upon themselves or tribe, yet, when neither of these passions calls forth their energies into action, are they most slothful and indolent. Like the tiger they require to be roused."

"Admitting this," Laborde replied, "for the reason is palpable, the only question that there is now to be decided is, how far they are responsible for these defects, or in how great a degree they share them with the rest of men. You cannot accuse them ever of betraying irresolution when in the presence of each other, and

when they have to oppose men according to their usual manner of fighting; but alone can you have seen them hesitate when brought against regular troops, whose discipline and united force has generally easily overthrown their dispersed and single opposition. But this is the case all all over the world, and is the same with all men not inured to regular warfare. You must allow them to possess all the following attributes, and which are the same as their fellow man, though civilized, can boast of; some of which, however, they possess more slightly, others more rominently, and others again more eminently; such as humanity and kindness towards their friends; and even amongst us it is not invariable that we show these towards our enemies; in their pursuits, when once undertaken, great application, considerable endurance, and watchfulness, joined with revenge and remembrance of hatred; cunning in the conception of their plans, courage to effect them; and at times, when properly treated, docility."

"I do," said the Major.

"And you alone complain of their ruthless propensities when in fight?"

"Alone of that."

"You mentioned just now the massacre, as you termed it, of the Lawrences, and complained of the seeming violation of the rules of war in the slaying alike both the mother and her helpless children. But you must remember that in thus forming your opinion, your judgment has been guided by the European notions in which you have been educated, and which you have always sought scrupulously to obey; thus the customs of the natives, in place of being tried by an unprejudiced standard, have in reality only been condemned because they differ from the arbitrary and contradictory laws of the whites. Setting aside the right which each nation has to fight according to its own method, which ages and habit have strengthened into the observance which you call honour, which of the two following pictures would have been preferable? Suppose their house had been a town, attacked, assaulted and carried by troops of any

of the most civilised nations of Europe; remember the scene of spoliation and, worst of all, of violation which would ensue: the males robbed of their property would be, no matter whether of the noblest or meanest extraction, reduced to poverty, and compelled to beg their bread. But how much harsher is the fate which would await both mother and daughter, who robbed of the peerless jewel, honour, would be far more likely to deprive themselves of existence, than to thank the being who had taken from them all that rendered it desirable; and is it not rather on the side of mercy to slay the babes, who if preserved must presently die of famine and starvation, there being no parent to protect them.

"But on the other hand, the slain but meet a fate they must encounter at some period, and they expire without being conscious of, or enduring hours of maddened grief. The same fate embraces all, and the child in death cleaves as when living to its mother's bosom. The males are considered by all, whether savage or not, as

the food upon which battle is to be fed, and the Indians, whose fights are usually but single combats, see no objection, and I think justly, to destroying their adversaries in the same manner as they encounter them. Tell me, sir, whether would you sooner have your daughter in a town stormed by your own countrymen, or in a dwelling attacked by these very Indians, whether Mohawks or Piquots?"

"I cannot agree with you," replied the Major, "it is very possible there are periods when the white man, throwing off restraint, commits even barbarous excesses; but nothing can reconcile, in my mind, these reduced into a system, or murders being regularly performed, whether from mere wantonness or false ideas of honour, such as the slaying of defenceless babes, unprotected mothers, or unguarded and helpless age. But it is getting late, and I cannot conceive what it is that is detaining Maria this morning; she is most frequently before me, and with her this hour is unusual."

"Perhaps," observed Laborde, "the exertion

of yesterday may have fatigued and caused her to oversleep herself. Her walk was a very long one, and perhaps my presence broke through your general hour of retiring." But this was not exactly what Laborde did think, for he was far too keen an observer of the sex not to know that these extra moments were devoted to the toilet, and in ornamenting her already sufficiently beautiful person.

"It may be so, but she seldom is beyond her time, even when she has seen much later hours than those of last night."

But here, Vernon's observations were put an end to by the entrance of Maria, and the father felt a pleasure, so seldom an inmate of his breast, at perceiving she even looked more lovely than ordinary.

After the first compliments were over, they all proceeded into the room appropriated to the meals, and drew around the table to perform the only duty which is never or seldom sought to be avoided.

Selfishness, love, honor, or patriotism, may

each urge man to the performance of strange actions, and even to neglect their own proper interests, but never, at least within our knowledge, did any one in their sober senses, refuse, as a matter of principle, their breakfast.

The room in which they were assembled to perform this all-important function, was, for a dwelling in a new settlement, both large, lofty, and commodious. It was furnished with two tables, one of which was considerably larger than the other, and around which were placed benches. This belonged to the servants, who breakfasted, and had their meals in the same room, and at the same period as their master; the other was reserved exclusively for the Major and his daughter, or any casual visitor who might claim the hospitality of their roof.

At this Laborde took his seat, and he could not complain that it was not plentifully served; the farm-yard, the oven, and the dairy, alike contributed.

The meal being over, Laborde accompanied Major Vernon round the house, to view its differ-

ent advantages whether as a place of defence, or as a more peaceful farm; and the former was particularly struck by its interior strength, and perfect adaptation to all the purposes of resistance, its numerous loopholes, from which an enemy might be fearfully annoyed, and also its protection from fire, in several large cisterns which every shower kept filled, and which would render abortive every attempt to burn its garrison out, as there was not only a sufficiency of water immediately to have extinguished it, but also to have flooded the house, should it have become necessary, from top to bottom.

Having seen and admired all these preparations for defeating the intentions of any enemy, Laborde returned to the sitting-room, where he remained alone in the company of Maria, for her father was compelled to proceed to superintend some improvements he had planned, and with all his power he endeavoured to profit by the golden moments thus placed at his disposal. Being an excellent musician, and possessing a very good voice, he both played and sung, or else accom-

panied Maria upon the guitar; he strove in every way to produce a favourable impression, yet strange, though he appeared as the universally admitted conqueror of the past match, and preferred Maria's pieces, or rather her favorite ones, to all others, he quickly perceived, that though he was liked, and even considered agreeable, his progress to being loved was exceedingly slow; and he knew, that with a girl of her disposition, his only chance of success, lay in one of those sudden conceptions of passion which so frequently carry every other feeling before them; and that to obtain her love by slow degrees, was next to impossible.

Still, however, he determined to persevere, though his prospect of success was so faint, and his primary hope had already been proved vain. He redoubled his attentions, throwing into his voice all the pathos possible, and upon whatever he spoke, using the brightest and softest language; whilst to the aid of his tongue, he brought the eloquence of the eye as an auxiliary.

The entrance of Vernon disturbed him in the

midst of a speech in which he was describing with all his power, the pleasures and scenes of gay and lively Paris.

"Ah! Laborde," said Vernon, "you must be careful how you open your trenches, as the besieged may sally, and you become a captive in place of summoning a surrender."

"I am afraid so," replied Laborde, "but I must abide my fate, since I fear I am already in chains, and the possibility you have mentioned has occurred."

"Then I hope your conqueror will not treat you with much rigour, but will act as a generous foe and concede you your liberty upon fair conditions. What say you, Maria? Do you make any objection to receive the parole of Laborde?"

"I really," replied Maria blushing, "do not understand to what you refer, unless you meant to enquire of me whether I considered M. Laborde might be entrusted with his parole in case of becoming your prisoner; if you did I should reply, that I think you might."

"And very pretty of you to say so," her father observed; "but what tale has Laborde been narrating you that thus causes you to place so much confidence in him? Is it any maid delivered by the strength and valour of his arm? Any enormous and monstrous giant slain, or is it any of those adventures of which you are so fond of reading?"

"I must object to your questions," said Laborde, "and do not think it fair of you to require private conversation. Your law, I believe, bears me out in pleading this against the manner of your examination, and, therefore, as counsel for your daughter, I protest against, and request that you withdraw them."

"I did not know," replied the Major, "that I was soon to encounter a champion, or I should have been more guarded. I only wished to be acquainted with part, or at least with some of the conversation which has passed; but since it is so strictly and entirely private, and such opposition is made on this account to my questions, I will withdraw them and no longer press my inquiries,

since the replies to them would be disagreeable or inconvenient."

"Oh! no," said Maria, "I did not in the least wish you not to know what we had been talking about. Music and France have been our principal themes."

"I feel much obliged to you," Vernon replied, "for informing me of the principal themes, the immaterial and more private ones I never expected you would reveal;" and then turning to Laborde he said, "I have just received a letter which confirms the dread I had of a coming rupture with France, and in fact my correspondent informs me that war between the powers of England and that country is all but declared."

"That certainly is sorrowful news," replied Laborde, endeavouring to conceal his joy at this announcement, "but perhaps," he continued, "this may be,as so many like reports are, entirely without foundation, and merely has its origin in imagination."

"I only wish," said the Major with a sigh, "that I could think so. But my correspondent

is by far too well informed a man of the passing events to be misled, or give heed to either reports or rumours."

"At all events let us hope for the best, and flatter ourselves whilst there is peace that it may continue. I must, however, confess that the truth of your communication is more than I well can doubt, though I may desire to do so. I have myself suspected it to be the case for some time past, having perceived runners to be continually passing among the Piquots and tribes friendly to my country; and I know also that large presents of trinkets, blankets, rifles and powder, have lately been made to them for the purpose, as I suppose, of securing their alliance. You also, I should conjecture, will not on your parts be unprepared, and the old smothered animosity of the Iroquois nations would require but little fanning to burst out again into a flame, and burn with more than its former violence. The Mohawks, I believe, have never buried the hatchet."

"I have no doubt but that our enemies will find us well prepared when the hour of action

shall have arrived," observed the Major in a quiet tone, as though he suspected that it were the intention of Laborde to obtain from him information that might be useful to his countrymen concerning the preparation in progress to meet or to attack them when the declaration should be made "But," he continued, "I hope we shall not have to avail ourselves of our precautions, and find we have adopted them quite unnecessarily. We must now make ready for dinner, or the bell which will sound shortly will certainly find us unprepared to attack in that quarter."

Taking this hint, Maria retired to her room, and Laborde and the Major shortly to their apartments, for the warning of the latter had now become quite useless, as the scent of the meal had begun to invade the house. Generally speaking in proportion as coming events send their shadows before them, so does a good dinner precede itself by its odour, and most unhappy is that being who finds it either disagreeable, or undesirable.

CHAPTER VII.

Heaven protects the feeble with its power,
And checks the base in their presumptuous hour;
In vain they labour; strive from morn to morn,
The cheating flower yields them but its thorn:
For as the Just One wills, each plan is crost;
Their efforts vain, and all their evil lost:
It seems as though that they did chase the wind;
It 'ludes their grasp, and leaves them far behind.

A WEEK had passed, and the rumours of war, at first uncertain and doubtful, had now become sureties. Laborde was impatient and anxious to be amongst the first band which should make an inroad into the British possessions, and to injure those to whose hospitality he was even at this very moment indebted; but his newly-awakened passion for Maria detained him. He felt the conviction that she did not love him;

yet still he lingered, hoping that it might be produced, and spring up from among the seeds of friendship.

Whilst he was thus irresolute, the intelligence arrived of a gallant affair between a few Piquot warriors and a superior party of Iroquois hunters. This redoubled his impatience. He would gladly, had he had the power, have thrown off the light silken cords which bound him. He knew that his engagements would have connected him with this band; and of necessity he would have contributed to, and shared in their success, and in the honour attendant upon it. This determined him to press his design upon Maria to a conclusion, and then to return home, collect some native warriors, and lead some attack himself: for though no official declaration of war had yet been made, it was hourly and daily expected, and had, in fact, virtually commenced, for both parties, directly they met or encountered each other, proceeded at once to blows, and the border already was the theatre of frequent rencontres, in the which the combatants antici-

pated the intelligence, invariably supposing it delayed by some unknown cause, and never doubting but that it was being speeded.

Laborde, having formed his determination, resolved to put it as quickly as possible into execution, and chose his opportunity during a walk that he made alone with Maria. The Major being absent, observing the completion of some repairs in his residence, and encouraging by his presence a party of young borderers at target practice.

The sun had just fallen below the horizon, covering and enveloping the western sky in a flood of the purest light, and tinging the few vapoury clouds that floated above of a deep crimson. The scene was perfectly still, and no sound save their own footsteps could be heard.

"How beautiful!" observed Laborde, "how magnificent is the setting sun! He sinks to his rest so calmly and so holily, that one must forgive an ignorant peasant of the old days for bending his knees in adoration, and believing he worshipped a divinity."

"It is," replied Maria, "a splendid sight. I think the setting sun yields neither for beauty nor majesty to anything we possess. It is decidedly the most lovely production of nature, especially when the various hues become so soft as they are at present."

"Nay, you are wrong in making that assertion," said Laborde, accompanying his words with a respectful glance. "There is, at least, one more of nature's productions which, in my eyes, appears vastly superior for beauty."

A pause of some minutes ensued, of which Laborde availed himself to arrange his ideas; then, addressing Maria, he continued:

"And yet what we now view with so much admiration, may to-morrow be hidden from our eyes by some envious cloud. So is it with me; I know not how long it may be before I shall again gaze upon, in all its loveliness, the bright sun of my soul."

"I suppose this is intended as a compliment to myself; if so, it is my bounden duty to return you many thanks for it;" and as Maria

spoke she bowed in mock gravity. "I did not know, however, that you proposed quitting us so soon, or were so anxious and desirous of becoming one of my father's and my country's enemies, or eager to place yourself in the ranks of the latter."

"Maria, you are mistaken. You cannot for an instant believe that there is any one who would for a moment desire to become the foe of Maria Vernon. I would a thousand times sooner cut off my right hand, or ceasing to be reckoned among the living, occupy a place with my fathers in their grave, than be so ranked. But I owe a duty to my country which, be my private feelings what they may, I must perform, and though it would cause my heart to bleed to be opposed by the misfortune of my birth to one who is so nearly and so dearly allied to you, yet am I unhappily compelled by my adverse fate to be so. Let me hope, however, that I never shall be considered by you in the light of an adversary, and this would afford me

consolation, in some measure, amidst my unhappiness."

"Indeed you place a great deal more of consideration, and attach more of importance to my thoughts than they deserve, but if it will be any consolation for you, under your extremely hard fate of seeking glory and renown, for me to grant your request, I will do so, and promise you that you shall never be considered by me in any other light than that of a friend. In return for this I hope, should any necessity oppose you to my father, that you will give such directions to those who are with you, that he shall not be injured, and I thus be deprived of my only protector."

"Only as a friend?" enquired Laborde in a sorrowful tone. "Maria, I had hoped that the love that beats in my bosom would have met with some other return than the cold unmeaning appellation of friendship,"

"How could I do so?" she replied, with a firmness in her tone which told Laborde he had nothing to hope, "How could I do so? when perhaps a few days may see you and my father

each seeking with the excitement of battle to deprive one another of the life which would be so necessary to my happiness to preserve. It is unreasonable of you to ask, much less to expect such a thing."

"Maria, consider once again. Mine is no childish, boyish love which crumbles and falls away at the first rebuff, rather like the fanning breeze to the spark, opposition but increases the intensity and makes my fire burn fiercer. You rest your objection upon the score of the opposite positions held by your father and myself; now hear me, I am ready to sacrifice all my dreams of ambition and of glory at the altar of love. I will quit my countrymen; incur even the odium of being a traitor, and range myself upon your father's side, if you will say by doing this, that I even may hope my love will be returned. For this I would for ever forget what country gave me birth. Speak, and remember my future fate hangs upon your tongue. It is in your power to render me the happiest, or most miserable being under the broad canopy of heaven."

"Laborde, wherefore do you press me. I have already replied, as a friend I shall always regard you, but with other feelings than that I cannot. Were I to favour for one moment the sacrifice you proffer, I am certain it would not be long before you would execrate me as the cause of your being a traitor, hated and despised by all good and honourable Frenchmen. But now let us banish the subject."

"What, then, proud girl, you scorn the offer I have made you," exclaimed Laborde, whilst passion and disappointment rendered his voice unnatural; "consider," continued he, casting upon the ground his rifle which he had brought with him, and standing perfectly still, "consider once again, I give you one more chance, but my terms are different. Will you consent to be mine and fly with me to my home. Say yes, and no queen, surrounded by her ready and obedient subjects, can be treated with one half the respect you shall be. Say no, and by all the powers, naught shall preserve you. There are none nigh who can protect you; you are here alone with

me, and bitterly shall you repent the refusal which renders desperate one who would protect you with his life. Haste and be quick in your reply, the moments are passing. I wish not to be interrupted and compelled to spill blood, and thus have to answer for two crimes in one day."

"What means this violence, sir?" enquired Maria, seeking to conceal the fear with which his words inspired her under the mask of a courage she did not feel, and which was quite foreign to her true sensations. "What means this violence, sir? Do you think to terrify me by its assumption to accept a hand which may so soon be stained with the blood of my father? Remember that I am the child of a British officer, and inherit part of his spirit; therefore are your threats unable to intimidate me. But," she continued, in a less lofty tone, wishing, if possible, to conciliate him, "let us return home, and I will give your proposal more consideration. I will speak to my father; it is not fit that I should give a positive answer without consulting him."

"At all events you show yourself not wanting in diplomacy," replied Laborde, regarding Maria with a smile which might have been stolen from the cheek of some fiend; and which arose from his consciousness of her perfect helplessness in spite of the high tone of her language. "So," he continued in a derisive manner, "so you would wish to return home to inform your father of my kind attentions and generous proposal to his daughter. No, no, my pretty bird, you are now in the power of the fowler, and he is not in the least inclined to let you escape so easily. But we are losing time. Once again I require an explicit answer. Will you consent to quit your father and follow me, or take the reward your obstinacy so well merits? Bear in your memory whilst you make your decision that you are entirely unprotected and in my power. Will you, or will you not? Yea, or nay?"

She perceived the peril and danger of her situation; but this in itself gave her courage. The sense of her unprotected position served to

remind her that she must rely entirely upon her own exertions to extricate herself. First looking round to see if any one was nigh who would assist her, she replied, whilst disappointed hope and new found self-confidence were strangely blended together in her tone:

"I have already, sir, replied to your inhuman proposition of deserting my father: your unmanly threat of violence will not terrify me into retracting this expressed resolution; and though you boast that I am in your power, yet there is a hand above which will protect me, and against which you will be able to avail nothing."

"Then let it protect you, if it can!" exclaimed Laborde, as he advanced towards her and seized her in his arms. She shrieked and struggled, alternately imploring his mercy, and striving to disengage herself from his grasp: but he held her with the force of a vice. In vain, it seemed, she made the forest glades to echo with her cries. She gradually felt her strength fail her; her eyes swam; she scarcely could oppose resistance

to the vile and diabolical attempt of the ungrateful villain; and now Laborde had begun to congratulate himself upon, and to promise himself an infernal success, when a heavy blow felled him to the ground, and raising himself more than half stunned, he beheld Frank Kennedy standing by, his face red and flushed from the haste he had made, and every feature betraying the rage and indignation with which he was filled.

He seemed debating with himself whether he should follow up his first punishment, and take immediate satisfaction upon the overthrown Frenchman, by taking away the little life his blow had left, or proceed to give assistance to Maria, who had sunk exhausted upon the ground. Fortunately for Laborde the latter consideration predominated, and first venting his anger, he said, addressing him:

"And are you not a fine rascal? a precious great villain? Why, you are ten times worse than any lying, thieving Piquot I have ever heard of. If I were to put a bullet through

y ur body, I'd be ashamed to take your scalp, and it would only be a waste of powder and ball. Now, just be off with yourself, or I won't say I mightn't be tempted to bore you against my own wish, and it would only be serving you something better than you deserve."

Laborde answered only with a scowl, which affected Frank but little, and he proceeded to raise Maria, informing her at the same time that there was now no cause for fear.

Whilst he was stooping to assist her he stumbled, most fortunately, forward, for at the same moment as he fell, a bullet whistled by, and he heard the simultaneous report of a rifle. Leaping up, he perceived Laborde just recovering his weapon from his unsuccessful aim, whilst disappointed passion gave him a look almost demoniacal.

Enraged at this treacherous attempt, Frank seized his own piece, and covering the Frenchman with it, pulled the trigger; but, instead of the expected explosion, the useless snap alone was heard; and he remembered he had not charged

it since he had fired at a young buck, which he was pursuing with all the ardour of the chase, when the cries of Maria for assistance fell, not unwelcomely, upon his ear. Throwing away the useless weapon, he advanced with quiet intrepidity towards Laborde, cheered with the delightful certainty that he had Maria as a witness to his gallantry.

Meanwhile, the other prepared to meet him, and shifting his rifle in his hand, held it as a club, which threatened to fall with the force of annihilation upon any one who should venture, or dare to enter within the boundary of its sweep.

For some minutes the two combatants stood opposite to each other. The one warily avoiding coming within the prescribed bounds, and the other observing with equal caution each movement of his adversary. It required a quick eye and great self-command not to be deceived by Frank's manœuvres. Now, however, the crisis is approached, for the latter, leaping forward, with a well-performed feint, caused La-

borde to whirl his ponderous weapon round. Springing forwards ere he could recover his guard, Kennedy had closed with him, and flung his arms round his waist. Finding the combat to have assumed so entirely different a character, the Frenchman dropped his rifle, which served now but to inconvenience him, and sought to regain the advantage he had lost. Frank, as we have observed, having both his arms beneath those of his opponent, was enabled to bring the whole of his weight, strength, and dexterity into play, whilst the other, cramped by his position, could hardly maintain his ground, or himself from being thrown backwards.

Laborde and Kennedy were about equal; both were nearly of the same height, and though from the superior age of the former his limbs and muscles were more firmly knit, yet the greater activity of the latter, conjoined with his skill, preserved the balance equal, and rendered the event doubtful.

They grasped each other, and struggled.

Their hatred was mutual, for both had reason for this passion being excited. One from rage sought to revenge himself upon him who had so daringly crossed his path, and stepped between him and the accomplishment of his desires, and sought to repay the humiliation he had suffered. The other, fired by the cowardly attempt made upon him, derived encouragement and incitement from the knowledge of for whose protection, and for the avenging of whose insulted person he was exerting himself; and he was also not a little desirous of success, from a strong feeling of jealousy which he had at first conceived towards Laborde, when the latter defeated him at the shooting match, and which had been fostered and increased when he perceived his victor to have become an inmate of the Major's house; and often had Frank wished that he were in his present position when he had perceived Maria leaning upon the arm of the young Frenchman.

For one moment Laborde appeared to give way. Kennedy threw forward the whole of

his strength, and his opponent seemed to yield; he was pressed upon his spine, and nearly thrown. But quickly recovering himself he succeeded in placing his right arm beneath that of Frank's. The young woodsman in his turn is pressed—he staggered. Laborde perceived it and sought to trip him, but in making this attempt his own foot is caught, and in the very moment he was promising himself victory, he was overthrown, and fell, dragging Frank with him.

Quickly the latter disengaged himself; and drawing his knife, of which he had hitherto been unable to avail himself, in another instant would have buried it in the bosom of Laborde, when his uplifted arm was stayed in its descent, and looking up he perceived Maria, who said to him:

"Spare his life. He has already been sufficiently punished. Put by your knife, and slay him not. I do not request you, but require you to do this."

"Strike, fool!" cried Laborde: "it were far

better to suffer all than to accept life from such hands."

"There, now; he deserves my knife between his ribs for not keeping a civil tongue in his mouth!" exclaimed Kennedy, elevating his weapon, but his intention was once again hindered by Maria, who stopped his arm, saying:

"Mind not his language, but do as I have bid. Leave him to go whither he pleases."

"Well, Miss Vernon," said Frank, reluctantly quitting his grasp of Laborde, and in a manner that plainly told her wish sadly clashed with his own inclination, and that if he were left to himself it would be but very slightly that the pleadings of mercy would be attended to. "Well, Miss Vernon, if you wish it of course I must let him go. But with your leave I'll take care he doesn't be after trying to do any more mischief, or sending his lead after me when I stop him from playing the blackguard."

So saying, he spurned Laborde with his foot, and taking the latter's rifle, broke it in pieces by striking it against a tree, whilst its owner

walked sullenly away, nursing for the present his rage and shame at his defeat; and he alone was deterred from renewing the struggle on account of his want of any weapon with which he might attack the young woodsman with even hopes of success.

Regardless of his muttered threats and vows of retribution, Frank joyfully escorted Maria, and how did the thrill of pride and joy vibrate through his whole frame when she placed her arm in his, and supported herself upon his robust and more than willing shoulder. Readily would he have undergone, for one tithe his present happiness, one hundred times the danger, or to have protracted the present moment have opposed and encountered all the Labordes who ever were born or created. For the first time he felt sorrowed and grieved when the dwelling of Maria appeared in view.

Great was the indignation of the Major when he heard of the behaviour of his late guest; and it was with most impatient feelings that

he listened to the recital of Frank, who, though he slightly glanced over the part he had himself performed, scarce referring to the contest, did anything but the same with regard to the dangers of, and courageous self-defence by Maria, upon which he most considerably enlarged; as he averred that Laborde, baffled almost entirely by her strength, had, enraged at her resistance, deliberately fired upon her. Her praises was a theme upon which Kennedy was ever ready to speak, and as he had now a subject upon which he could fairly employ himself, he did not conclude before he had not only well nigh exhausted the patience of his hearers, who were anxious to hear the end of his tale, but ascribed much more courage to his daughter than the Major ever imagined she possessed. After having regretted her interposition, he congratulated himself upon the "spanking kick" he had given Laborde; but we are afraid that had Frank imagined his auditors would have believed him, it is very probable in his anxiety to make her valour known, he would have

maintained that it was the pretty foot of Maria which had dealt it.

When he had finished, Vernon exclaimed:

"The ungrateful villain! the scoundrel! thus to seek to requite the kindness I have shown him."

"Say the word, Major," exclaimed Frank, with eagerness, "and I will bring you his scalp, or he shall have mine, before to-morrow morning."

"No, no, Frank; he has been my guest, and eaten at the same table with me; besides, I owe a deep debt to his father, who once preserved my life. The most he has been able to accomplish, thanks to heaven and to you, has been to terrify my daughter; and though his conduct may be said to be sufficient to cancel this, yet I will hold him this time free. I will not, however, put the same trust in his generosity. Therefore collect some of your comrades, whose distribution I will myself direct. I know he has some connexion with the Piquots; and, though war is not yet declared, hostilities have commenced, and I make

no doubt he would avail himself of that excuse, if he were to meet with any body of his friends, to attack us, hoping to find us unprepared."

"Very well, Major; I will see to it, and in two hours I will have my scouts out. Then be they who they may, Piquots or Frenchmen, they'll just get a precious good peppering, that you may know they're coming, and not a single fellow with red on his face, or his hair tied up behind, shall come over here." So saying, jerking his rifle under his arm, and whistling a noted border tune, Kennedy left the house, whilst his eyes and mien well told that the darling desire of his soul was to have one shot at Laborde for the one the latter had had at him, and thus to remove all cause or reason for jealousy, by making himself quits. He flattered himself if he ever should have the same opportunity at Laborde as he had had at him, that the Frenchman would find it difficult to pull another trigger.

CHAPTER VIII.

Rise, tribe of the Beavers! spring up into life;
For hark! 'tis the call unto battle and strife,
How sweet is the war-whoop; how welcome its sound,
How widely it echoes; how shrilly around.

Through summer's fierce heat; o'er the cold winter snow;
Well know we the way to the homes of our foe.
Nor the broad glare of day, nor darkness of night,
Can conceal, nor can hide, the path from our sight.

Be crimson our hatchets, our knives red with gore,
Nor cease us to slay, 'till their tribes are no more.
Their maids and their children, we'll join in the flood,
That we'll cause so to flow, of enemies' blood.

WAR now began to assume its horrors; and the hunter who laid his head to rest knew not if he should ever raise it again possessing its natural covering. Messengers were continually passing and repassing, bearing advice to the colonists with warnings to be upon their guard, and ex-

hortations to defend themselves, and make exertions on their own behalf. For the settlers with the exception of those immediately exposed, or situated near the border, showed an extraordinary apathy; occupying themselves with their commercial and agricultural pursuits, leaving all that concerned the military to the mother country. This, however, did not apply to the borderers, all of whom, especially those over whom the Major had control, most nobly and willingly responded to the call to arm, and coming forwards, each enrolled himself under some chosen comrade in whom he had confidence, or whom he desired to lead him; forming companies, varying in number, from twenty to a hundred; and which, scattered as they were, though they could not effect anything of importance, yet, by the inroads they made into their enemies' country, not only harassed the latter, but frequently caused considerable alarm; all that could be known of them was, they had been seen, felt, and had disappeared; but the quarter which would be the scene of their future

attacks of course remained in mystery or uncertainty, which was only removed when the intelligence arrived of some district ravaged, or detachment cut off. Thus each day the young men became accustomed to the arts and stratagems of war, and fine bands were being trained at the expense of our enemies, and preparing for the severe struggle about to ensue, which had for its object no less than the possession of the third of a vast continent, and the preponderance in a new found world.

Although no regularly organised force had as yet attacked the colonists, yet were they also on their parts subject to the same harassing, murderous system of warfare as that which they themselves pursued; and the whoops of the native warriors, on the side of France, frequently arose from among the clearings of the English. The friend who went to visit his neighbour would frequently find the expected cheerful log-hut a heap of smoking ruins; the father lying on his threshold, half consumed by the flames of his own roof; and the mother pressing her slain

infant to her bosom, stained with both their bloods.

Major Vernon, himself, superintended the enrolment of a party of woodsmen, about sixty in number, who were divided into two several parties of thirty each, one of which was under the command of Frank Kennedy, and the other under that of Henry Martin, a young borderer, second alone to Frank in regard to his dexterity with the rifle, but rather his superior in the other qualifications necessary for an officer; being more skilled in the arts and stratagems of Indian war, more cool and cautious, and less under the control of his passions.

Often had the Major to restrain the fiery impetuosity of the young men, who were frequently on the point of hurrying to the scene of action when the intelligence arrived of some friend or relative being awoke from sleep only by the savage whoop of their enemies, and hurried into eternity by their merciless tomahawks. At last tidings came to Frank that his only brother, a few years senior to himself, and who having mar-

ried, had pushed farther into the wood, had been attacked, and had, after a gallant defence, surrendered; but not to be treated as a prisoner who merited even the approbation of his foes for his courage, but to be put to death in the most painful and agonizing manner savage ingenuity could invent; his two children being first butchered before his eyes—his wife slain; and himself, after having been made to endure this torturing sight, was bound to a stake, his body pierced and tormented with innumerable burning splinters, and finally he had yielded up his life amidst the scorching flames.

This news was conveyed by a half-witted lad, who at the commencement of the attack had had sufficient sense to conceal himself, and, remaining hid, had perceived the elder Kennedy, to avoid the fire about to be placed at his door, give himself up; and from his hiding-place had looked on whilst the Indians performed their savage and unaccustomed ceremony; for it is unusual for a war party to torture whilst on an expedition, this piece of delicious refinement

being generally put off until their return home. He who brought this news also added that the leader of the Indians was a white man, and, from his description, Frank doubted not but that he was indebted, for being thus made his brother's heir, to the kindness and interference of Laborde, who thus sought to requite the debt he was under towards him, and had slain the one to be avenged upon the other brother.

No sooner had Kennedy become acquainted with this event, than he proclaimed his resolution of avenging it upon its authors, and communicating his design to his comrades, the whole of the latter readily promised their aid. Vain was it for Vernon to seek to oppose this determination of the young borderer, or dissuade his companions from their avowed purpose; they one and all declared they would join in the attempt to enforce some retaliation upon the murderers. In vain did the Major represent that this might only have been perpetrated as a decoy, to allure them away from their present impregnable position, and that their enemies, unable or afraid to attack them,

having the fort close by, within which they might retire and shelter themselves, had had recourse to this ruse to draw them away from its protection, and get them into his power: that also by their departure they would leave unguarded both all their possessions, their homes, and the remainder of their families, and place them quite at the mercy of the first who might choose to attack them.

Besides, of what avail could this expedition be? for he whom they went to seek, well knowing that what he had done would call down upon him a keen effort at revenge, would have long ago decamped from the scene of his barbarity. How could they follow him through his native wilds when every step would be but to plunge them into some difficulty or ambush, and expose them to fresh perils? How could their small numbers either expect to effect anything against him, even should they be able to encounter him, for from his superiority of numbers he would be enabled to overwhelm them, and destroy them entirely for their heedless presumption.

But vain was all the rhetoric that he employed, it was entirely lost upon the group of fiery beings who surrounded him; some of the older did indeed seem to waver when he mentioned the danger to which their families would be exposed, but this sensation was soon lost and destroyed when it came in contact with the recollection of an opinion frequently broached, that if once they could give a party of the Indians a good drubbing, it would prevent any others from troubling their part of the settlement.

When, however, he referred to the danger of the undertaking as it would affect themselves, the kindling eye, and muttered epithet of contempt bestowed upon their enemies, told him that upon this ground he must also fail.

However he succeeded in obtaining a tardy and unwilling promise, that if the enemy should be found to have quitted the neighbourhood, they would not pursue him. Having exacted this, Vernon required that they should not start for an hour, to allow him time to make arrangements to place in security the women and

children during their absence; for every one that was able joined this expedition, which would be the first, as they who composed it hoped, to encounter and be victorious over their enemy, from this part of the country.

The party who were thus about to proceed so adventurously to disturb a foe whose numbers they knew to exceed their own considerably, amounted to about thirty, half of whom belonged to the band already mentioned, the rest of whom were absent, residing too distant to allow of their being summoned in time to meet the impatient wishes of their comrades. The remainder consisted of some of the older members of the community, who, though not compelled to form part, yet did so either from being interested for their sons, or were urged to it on account of the expediency of striking some blow at their enemies; and also of a few hunters, men who subsisted entirely upon the produce of their rifle.

Two of these, upon whose experience the whole party flattered themselves with hopes of

success, took the lead and guidance of the expedition.

However much the wishes of the whole party were directed towards the accomplishment of one particular object, just in the same manner were they unanimous in differing with regard to their dress and accoutrements.

Here was a tall bony Scotsman, habited in his native kilt, for though away from his country, he still retained his affection, in all its strength, for his hills and for the land which had given him birth, steadfastly adhering to his national costume; at his side was girded an immense broadsword, in all probability an heir-loom in his family, and which, if report spoke true, had seen service ere this when some bloody feud drew it from its sheath and caused its wielder to seek his safety elsewhere. In his hands he carried a blunderbuss of no trifling size, down whose capacious mouth were rammed some fifty slugs and bullets, which required but the will of its owner to vomit forth its contents in a deadly shower of lead. Here an Irish-

man, wild from his native bogs—and whose predilection for one king in the place of another had induced him to "immigrit"—walked as unconcernedly as if going to a fair, whilst his weapon, a stout musket, is carried in a manner which renders it doubtful whether it is intended for the office its maker designed it to perform, or to be exercised after the fashion of the old favourite "shillalah." But yonder Yorkshireman plods cautiously along as carefully as though he were proceeding through the streets of the Metropolis with the produce of his market in hard cash, and suspected a robber in every one he encountered; in his left hand he holds a short description of pike, a piece of sharpened iron attached to a stick about six feet in length, and in his right hand is a loaded fowling-piece ready for use.

The two hunters, True Eye and Sure Scent, as they were called by the young men, from the certainty of the one with his rifle, and the peculiar success of the other in discovering a trail, or in following it up, to whom, as we have ob-

served, the command had been allotted, separating a few of the young men, placed them in advance, on the flanks and in the rear of the main body to serve as scouts and to detect any ambuscade. True Eye went in the van, whilst Sure Scent followed with the force.

Having now disposed of their power, they prepared to set forth, being, however, previously cautioned by their commanders as to their behaviour in attack, retreat, or cover, and in case of their own death—of which possibility they spoke in a tone of such nonchalance, as if it were of no more importance than the mere loss of their experience to the party, that had not Vernon known their constant habitude to scenes of death, and of the most perilous danger, had hidden from them all the horrors with which these two conjoined are wont to assail the breasts of other less favored mortals, it would have filled him with immeasurable surprise; in case of their death they advised them as to their best method of proceeding; mentioning the various stratagems their enemies might attempt, and the best means

for them to pursue to meet the arts employed.

Major Vernon, having accompanied them for about a couple of miles upon their march, quitted them, bidding them adieu, and wishing them every success, but inwardly praying they might not stumble upon those whom they went to seek.

For some minutes he watched the band, until the last of the forms which composed it was hid from him by the intervening trunks and foliage, and listened until the tramp of their footsteps had died away in the distance; then turning with a heavy and foreboding heart, he pursued his way homewards.

His road lay for nearly three fourths of the way through the dense wood, which he passed without encountering anything to confirm his apprehensions, and how well grounded they were, the sequel will show. He had now gained the border of the wood, and for the sake of its shade, and of its loneliness, which corresponded so well with the state of his own bosom, he preferred pursuing

his way along its margin, to the more exposed, and less circuitous path which led directly to his own home, and from feeling also a desire to visit the tomb of his deceased wife, which was situated on the top of a small rising hill whose crown had been kept sacred from the intrusion of the axe; and where some few giant trees still remained, which sighed to every breeze, their plaints seeming to mourn the loss of their comrades, and whispered with a thousand tongues their grief at this extinction of their race, and at the loneliness with which they raised their leafy heads in comparison with days gone by.

Having ascended to its summit, Vernon seated himself upon a small bench and gave a sigh to the memory of her for whose last and still beloved remains this spot had been originally prepared, and which had since been tended with all the care that the deposit it contained seemed to merit.

His present anxiety, however, soon mastered his grief at his melancholy loss, and his thoughts became occupied with uneasy surmises and

conjectures concerning what might befal or become the fate of the gallant and small party he had just quitted, when his attention was attracted by a half stifled groan, and looking in the direction whence the sound proceeded, he saw the half-witted lad we have spoken of before, under the merciless hands of one of the native warriors, who looked both an object of fear and disgust in his fantastic war-paint, and considerably more so, than if he had appeared in the shade nature had originally endowed him with, and who was in the very act of tearing from the hapless youth's gory head his reeking scalp; whilst at the base of the hill about threescore of his comrades were winding their quiet stealthy way round, so as to gain the point where the party of woodsmen had entered the forest; and do this in such a manner as not to be observed from the fort, their design being to place themselves upon the adventurers' rear, and thus to prevent the garrison, for they knew not that the whole of its effective force was absent, from taking the alarm, and frustrating a surprise, meditated upon them

as we will show, by another party, from taking effect, and also to hinder the absent party from gaining intelligence of this movement, in time sufficient to return and embarrass the accomplishment of their designs.

All this passed in a moment before the mind of the Major, who perceived the danger with the glance of a military man. For some minutes, overcome by surprise, he continued gazing at the party who had arisen, as it were, from out of the bosom of the earth, so unexpectedly, and without the least intimation of their approach, as it appeared to him. But now he turned, as a sudden fear shot through his breast, and looked in the direction of his home; where, to his unutterable grief and dismay, he perceived another party of about twenty, headed by his late guest, in the very act of crossing the bridge which had carelessly been left undrawn for the purpose of allowing of his own crossing, when he himself should return; and which now offered an easy passage to the savage foe. Frantic at this sight, he rushed, regardless of the exposure of his

person, towards the point which, containing all that was an object of solicitude to him, was menaced with such imminent danger. Fortunately, he was concealed from the view of the Indians nearest to him by the intervening hill, and descended the slope unperceived and unpursued. In his haste, he took the most direct road, and in place of passing over a newly cropped meadow, which though it would have lengthened the distance, would have offered less obstacles to his course, and allowed of his proceeding much more quickly, he plunged into a field of high, standing corn, which catching in his legs served to impede him considerably; and by the time he had reached its further extremity completely fatigued him by the resistance it had offered to his passage.

At this juncture, Laborde appeared, bearing Maria in his arms, and issuing from the house that now seemed to have become a perfect pandemonium from the shrieks of fear, of agony, and of death, which arose from within its walls, where with relentless ferocity the Indians were

slaying alike the young and the old, the youthful and the decrepid; and already the curling smoke began to arise from some portions, and told that the second most greedy of the elements had been called to aid man in its destruction.

Vernon, partly from his eagerness, partly from his fatigue, now tripped and fell; and the short period he took to raise himself afforded him time for recollection, and to consider the utter hopelessness of confronting Laborde, when close to, and within reach of immediate assistance from his myrmidons; and as he perceived the Frenchman was hurrying with his precious burden directly towards where he was; as though he were desirous of placing a head, upon which was so fair a trophy, out of the sight of and secure from the itching fingers of his followers and for the protection of which he feared his authority would be of no avail. The Major resolved to await his approach and strive to take away what he justly regarded as unlawful plunder and most unfairly possessed.

He had not to wait long; Laborde soon came

up, and so occupied was the latter with his fears lest any of his followers, perceiving the prey, would require to go shares, and to receive as their portion, the scalp, and he was anything but desirous of such a partner, as he seemed to consider that the loss of the soft hair would considerably impair the beauty of the other features, that he did not perceive the Major until close upon him, who having armed himself with a heavy stick, which he had found upon his way, held it in his hands in such a manner that Laborde could entertain but very few doubts as to what purpose it was intended to be applied.

Not being at all desirous of having his senses confused by such an application, the Frenchman placed the insensible body of Maria upon the ground, and, drawing his sword, advanced to meet him who thus unexpectedly arose in his path for the purpose of offering him opposition.

"Deliver yourself as my prisoner," said he, addressing Vernon, "and put down that cudgel as unbecoming."

"Ungrateful scoundrel! I will never be pri-

soner of yours, nor of any that are with you, so long as I possess a weapon, be it what it may," exclaimed the Major, following up his words with a blow, which, had it taken effect, would have prevented Laborde from ever resenting it, but which, as it was, fell harmless upon the well-tempered steel of the blade the latter outstretched to meet it. "Once again, Major Vernon, surrender to me. As an officer of his French Majesty I offer you honourable treatment and conduct. It is vain for you to resist. Listen! you may even now hear my people attacking yours who went forth to-day, and who must be overpowered, since my warriors are superior to them by nearly a half—your hold is already on fire. You cannot, if you consider for one instant, but be convinced of the reasonableness of what I bid you do."

"Never—you who would seek to betray the confidence a father had reposed upon your honour, are unworthy of being trusted." Again, as he concluded, he directed another blow at Laborde, with equally good-will and ill-fortune

with the preceding; this was parried by the Frenchman, who raising his sword struck at Vernon's head. The latter interposed his stick as a guard, but the steel cut through its ineffectual resistance, and came diminished of its force full on the officer's forehead, who dropped, stunned, to the ground; whilst his successful adversary, with a smile of satisfaction, wiped his sword and replaced it in its sheath. Lifting Maria, he glanced forwards, suspiciously, upon the long waving corn into which he had been about to plunge, and seeming to consider that as it had produced one foe it might contain others, he chose his path by the longer and more open one of the meadow; as his object was to gain the hill from which he had first been observed by the Major. Leaving him to gain it, we will turn to him of whom the Frenchman imagined he had so well rid himself, and whom now another danger menaced. The blow that Laborde had hoped would have deprived him of the inquisitive, impertinent and disagreeable interference of a father in-law, had only

had the effect of slightly stunning him. After a few minutes, his senses became more collected, and raising himself, he placed his hands to his head whence the blood was trickling and flowing down his face; seeking to clear his eyes of the gore which obstructed his vision. He then made an ineffectual effort to recover his feet; whilst making this attempt, he was perceived by one of the Indians, who, with a whoop of savage exultation at this promise of prey, rushed towards him. He laid his left hand upon Vernon's head, and pulling him backwards by his hair, raised his right to strike, when his hand relapsed. He fell to the ground, and another warrior lay upon him, whose hand was grasping his neck, and whose uplifted knife only, apparently, delayed its blow from the pleasure the conqueror appeared to derive in protracting the torture of his overthrown foe. The tongue of the latter protruded; his eyes seemed starting from their sockets, and his face turned each moment blacker: when, as if sorry thus soon to terminate his sport, the victor withdrew the fatal gripe of

his fingers, and the Piquot gradually recovering his breath, muttered in his guttural language:

"The Mohawks are deers—the Piquots are wolves. A Mohawk is afraid to meet the face of a Piquot, so he takes him from behind."

"The Piquot is a beaver with the heart of a deer—the Mohawk is the hunter that lays his traps cunningly. Piquot girl! a Mohawk warrior shall drink your blood, and dry your scalp in his wigwam."

"The Mohawk is afraid—he was a coward; the girls laughed at him, and told him to get a scalp, for his father's wigwam is empty. He went on the war-path; but he dared not look in a warrior's face, so he watched that he might be able to take his enemy from behind."

Unmoved by the taunts of his enemy, the Mohawk replied:

"The Piquot is a deer; he sleeps like the sloth. Will he call for his girl, for he is going to die? If he do she will not come. The dove mates not with the owl. She says, 'the Piquot is heavy. He sleeps on his path. His ears are

dull, and he knows not the fall of his enemy's mocassin. I will have the Mohawk; his eyes are never shut.'"

"The Mohawk is a deer. He boasts like a coward. He is afraid when he sees blood. The brow of the Great Spirit will become very black and cloudy when he looks upon the Mohawk, and he will say, 'This is a coward; he went to the war-path as a hare.'"

"Listen!" said the Mohawk, referring to the cracking of rifles, which could now be distinctly heard, and proceeded from the direction of the wood. "The Piquots go to take the scalps of their enemies; but the wolf shall feed on their hearts. Your fathers will be happy when they see you on the path of death."

And saying this he plunged his knife into his foe's bosom.

The latter smiled as he received its sharp point into his beating breast, as though he felt himself a triumph that his enemy's animosity must be stopped when opposed to the barrier of the grave; and that, when once under the pro-

tection of death, no implacable opponent could pursue him.

The next instant, the Mohawk had fulfilled his other threat, and the late strong and, until now, unconquered warrior, lay extended on the ground a scalpless corpse.

What a perfect paradox is the human heart, one moment under the rule of the most furious, dark, and odious passions; the next possessed by even the most tender and gentle. The Mohawk, after having committed an act, which, to an European, unaccustomed to think as he did, would appear as very nearly allied to murder, as he had slain his adversary not in the heat of battle, but after he had held conversation with him, and had added to the deed the most barbarous mutilation, now advanced towards Vernon to render him the service of the Samaritan. He, however, for whom this kindness was intended, not exactly remembering the difference between the paint of a Mohawk or of a Piquot, placed himself in the best attitude of defence his weakness would allow. The Indian

perceiving this suspicion, sought to remove it, and said in broken English, which we will, with the permission of our readers, take upon ourselves to translate fairly:

"The Greyhead is dazzled; he knows not his son. The Piquot thief is gone to his fathers, and the son of a Mohawk warrior speaks to the father of the white men. Let my father look; the scalp of his enemy is in the hands of his son, and his knife is red with blood."

"If you be a friend," the Major cried eagerly, "help me to recover my daughter, whom the villain Laborde has just torn from me. Have you others with you? If so, let us be immediately in pursuit. We have no time to lose. That is he, yonder."

And he accompanied his rapid utterance by pointing to the Frenchman, who had already climbed more than half-way up the hill's side.

"Tasharah is a Mohawk; he heard the rifles, and smelt the powder like the vulture; and he came to the battle. A few young men are with him; for the Mohawk is like the panther; he

likes to go to the path alone, and he will leap swiftly on the backs of his enemies. Does not my father hear the guns of his sons? The Piquots are like wolves round the carcass of the dead buffalo. The white man has taken away the flower, and the Mohawk will take it away from him, but not now."

"Wherefore not now? Wherefore delay? If you are really a friend, as you pretend to be, give me your help."

"The wise warriors will go to cover when they hear the guns of the pale faces. One wolf does not say to the buffalo, 'I will slay you;' but he—"

Here he was interrupted by a low hissing, and bidding the Major follow him, he led the way back among the corn to a spot where they came upon five other Mohawks, painted aud ready for strife.

CHAPTER IX.

How fair was Nature's garb of green:
How lovely looked the peaceful scene.
Wherefore hath man its beauties dyed;
And stain'd it with the crimson tide?
But lately here each sound was hushed;
And sparkling bright each streamlet gushed.
But, hark! what yells now fill the air;
What screams of agonis'd despair.
The stream appears as though the sun
Of autumn, when his day is done,
Had, as he sunk into his bed,
Deep ting'd it with his hue of red.

AFTER the Major had quitted the band of adventurers, the latter continued to proceed in the same order as we have already described, for about a mile and a half, when True Eye, who was in the van, suddenly stopped, and after gazing intently upon the ground, beckoned his brother hunter to him. This signal, Sure Scent immediately complied with.

"Well, True Eye," said the latter to him who had desired his presence, "I jist guis you see something, for it's not often you stand struck, jist like a tree, looking at nothing?"

"They call you Sure Scent," replied the other to this question, "so just put your nose here, and, like an Injian on a trail, tell me is this here the print of a mocassin, or does the wind play about like this with the leaves?"

And he pointed to a slight crushing of the dead leaves produced by some footstep.

Sure Scent carefully examined it, observed its direction, and giving vent to a low laugh, which partook as much of joyful pride at his own quickness of perception, as of contempt for those who would seek to deceive him, he addressed himself to his companion:

"Now, had you been as 'cute in Injian cunning as you are with your piece, you'd ha' seen through this as easy as they see through their windurs in the settlements. Now look y' here. This is an Injian's mocassin, and of a warrior on his first path; for you see he treads fair upon

his fut, when your reg'lar Injian goes more upon his toes. Then he takes from here," pointing to some grass which appeared slightly fresher than the rest, "his leaves to cover his marks with; but he's forgotten this one, and so leaves a trail as broad as a buf'lo's."

Accompanying his words with their demonstration, Sure Scent stooped down, and removing a few leaves, laid open to view the print of another footstep, and so continuing he traced these proofs of his assertion for nearly a dozen yards.

"Now I'll just show you what it is to know, and be up to these Injians and thur triks. Jist look at these, and tell me how many of the 'ooping rascals have been by here?"

"Why, I should calculate, now," replied True Eye, leaning upon the weapon which had procured him his honourable appellation, and speaking in the tone of one engaged in thought, and who was unable to form his opinion decidedly, or rather to gloss over the conjective nature of his reply by an appearance of consideration.

"Why I should calculate now it couldn't ha' been less nor six, or somewhere 'bout that."

"Six!" exclaimed Sure Scent contemptuously, "Why, I'll stake my piece 'ginst an Injian tomahawk that full sixty have made these broad marks, and ha' left the young fellow behind to cover them up. Now they've gone away on for the clearing, and will be scalping the gals and children before we can get there."

"Holloa! What's the matter?" enquired Kennedy, who came up at this moment, accompanied by Martin. "Have any of the thieves been giving you the dodge, or is it you have got upon their trail that they've left open and broad to point us out the way they've gone, since they hadn't time to cover it up, such a hurry were they in to be off as soon as they heard that the Vernon volunteers were at them, and ready to give them a drubbing if they stayed much longer?"

"We've found their trail, sure enough, young man," replied Sure Scent, "and it leads straight off to the big house you call the fort. And

what use them big houses are I never could know, 'cept they are to say to the Injians 'here's a lot of scalps,' and to bring them outlying about all the day and all the night. Here's their trail, and by this time some sixty painted devils are scalping away inside; or else firing in at the windurs, and yelling and 'ooping all round, with no one to give it 'em back but gals, and they're always so squalmish like, they never can fire a good shot."

"You are quite right," observed Martin, who had been examining the marks that had excited so much interest, "you are quite right; the trail runs straight for the fort; but don't you think, Sure Scent, it is two or three days old?"

"Of course I do," replied the person thus addressed rather tartly, as though he did not require any one to confirm his opinions, and felt half offended at its being done; "of course I do; but havn't you never heard of Injians outlying for a month if there was only the chance of getting a scalp for their trouble?"

"Yes; I know their patience to be great

when there is any probability of a return being made to them for its exercise," replied Martin, trying to conciliate the hunter by a tone of deference. "I have no doubt but when we set out with the intention of looking after them, they were even then near us, and perhaps not out of rifle shot. What think you will be the best to do, to return on their own trail, or by the road we've come?"

"Return," exclaimed Kennedy. "What! when we've come as far as this shall we go back because some Indian has taken it into his head to have a peep at the fort, and has covered up his marks that he mightn't be found out? After all mightn't this only be a trick to prevent our being on them too soon? I say for letting us go on." Here he was interrupted by an universal burst of disapprobation which came from the surrounding group. For the whole party had now collected round to learn what was the matter and subject of debate of their two leaders, and on being informed, did not feel desirous of pushing on in search of an enemy who might at

that very moment be slaughtering their kindred and families A consultation ensued, in which, with the exception of Frank's voice, it was unanimously determined to return home by as quick and expeditious a road as possible.

True Eye taking the lead, they proceeded with all the haste compatible with the necessary caution to be observed, and had nearly arrived without encountering either sign or token of their enemies, at the border of the wood. True Eye, deceived by the apparent calm, began to fancy that the Indians had this time overreached themselves, and had either waited for them in some other position, reasoning that the whites, become suspicious of danger from not having discovered them, would not return on the same road as they had followed in proceeding from home; or else perhaps their enemies, having observed their numbers and resolute appearance, had wisely avoided seeking a contest whose termination might be disastrous to themselves.

Already his pride had slightly mastered his caution, for he fancied that both some import-

ance and honour would be attached to his success in thus leading the van both in advance and in retreat.

His self-congratulations were not, however, destined to last long, for suddenly, and scarcely more than six yards distant, the flash of about a dozen rifles alone heralded the deadly greetings of his ambushed enemies, and five or six of the party, among them True Eye himself, fell to the ground either dead or mortally wounded.

"To cover! to cover!" shouted Sure Scent, "a thick bush or a large trunk; fire at 'em only when you are certain of their carcases." Giving these orders rapidly the hunter himself set the example of obeying them by taking possession of the first bush which offered to him concealment.

The others sought to do the same, but not before five or six more were stretched on their last bed, for it seemed that their wily foe had completely surrounded them, and entirely entangled them in his well-planned ambuscade.

In such warfare as this vain is all superior strength, courage, or agility; the only resources

left, for those engaged in it, are nearly as equally at the command of the boy as of the full-grown man—a quick eye, sure aim, and attention to the orders of your leader; but let the slightest unguarded movement betray your presence to the watchful enemy, and a bullet comes as an invitation card, admitting of no excuse or possibility of declining the honor "to sup with Pluto."

Sure Scent was now truly in his element, the speaking of the rifles was to his ears much more delightful, and far more agreeable than would have been a band of the most perfect harmony; his voice and weapon were heard simultaneously, now advising, now cautioning, and now in his quality of commander giving his quick and concise orders; his rifle is now to his eye, for the gleam of a weapon in an opposite bush showed him an enemy, and almost at the same moment as he fired, a bullet sped by his stricken foe, broke off a twig close to his head.

"That's sharp," he muttered, "and he must have pulled with my bullet boring through him, and the twinge it gave him jist saved me! But

it's no wonder though it came so close, for the rascals can almost shoot in their sleep as well as I can wide awake."

Then speaking aloud, he directed Kennedy to keep to the right for the purpose of driving off the Indians who were pressing rather closely upon that quarter.

"Pepper away at the beggars in front," he continued "and push for your homes. You, Scotcher," he said, beckoning to Mr. Ivon, "crawl down here, and bring that precious great thing you call a blunderbuss with you, but look out that the imps don't see you, or they'll make but little of a blunder of boring you well through;" and the hunter laughed at his own conceit.

Mr. Ivon complied with one part of the command but not with the other. He would not lower his dignity, as he considered he would be doing, if he concealed his movements, and quitting the cover in which he had first taken refuge, when he had perceived all the others doing the same, and had yielded to the force of his companions' example, he walked quietly and steadily

forwards as though ignorant of or despising all danger.

No sooner did he appear than he was greeted by the Piquots with a whoop of pleasure, who regarded him as a fair target upon which to exercise their skill. The bullets flew thick and fast around him, his tartan was cut to stripes, he was now within a few yards of safety, a ball grazed his temple, he raised his hand to the wound and another struck him in the breast; he fell forwards, and the only words he uttered were, "My poor Jeannie."

"Fool," exclaimed Sure Scent, who not either understanding or appreciating the motives of Mr. Ivon, had considered his action to be merely a piece of bravado, and a useless and ridiculous exposure of his person. "Fool! didn't he think an Injian rifle wouldn't ha' gone off of itself at such a chance; I must try and get that big thing of his, if it's only jist to pay the beggars off for having shot away at him like that. Saying this, he proceeded, with much care and caution, to attempt to gain possession of the weapon that

had cost its owner his life. By means of imitating the cunning and wily motions of the snake, he at last obtained it, and then, observing equal prudence in his movements, he returned with his prize to his old position; but he did not accomplish this before he had received a small wound in his shoulder. Having regained his security and concealment, he commenced examining, with much curiosity, the Scotsman's weapon.

"Now, I jist guis," muttered the hunter, "that this will pepper their hides for them, or there's no faith in powder and lead." Having satisfied himself that the piece contained as much of destruction as it could, with any regard to safety, Sure Scent, slinging his own rifle across his shoulder, departed from his position. Adroitly availing himself of the shelter of some low-tangled shrubs, he arrived within a few yards of the bush from whence had arisen the first opposition his party had experienced, and which, from its situation, and near a dozen rifles which were used with awkward and fatal precision upon the borderers, formed the greatest impediment in

the way of the latter's return. Here pausing he considered how he might best discover the situation of his enemies, and persuade them to discharge their weapons. After a few minutes' thought, an expedient struck him; and taking off his coat and cap he placed them upon a branch, which he moved in such a manner, that even at a short distance it bore the appearance of a man crawling cautiously forwards. His device succeeded, for each of his foes, who was able to perceive the half-hid figure, and whose weapon was charged, immediately fired. Sure Scent had made his observations as quick as the flash of his adversaries' weapons. His huge piece was levelled and directed towards where he had perceived they lay thickest. Its contents bellowed forth, and told among his enemies with fearful effect. Casting it away from him, before they could recover from their consternation, and without even allowing time for the smoke to clear away, he was among the survivors. The muzzle of his rifle was pointed at the breast of one, and he sank a corpse; its butt, brought upon

the head of a second, crushed it to atoms. Two alone remained to contest the possession of the thicket with him, one of whom had already been wounded, but the other, a tall, muscular Indian, was untouched.

The wounded man, being nearest, first rushed to attack the intruder; but from his haste and weakness, he stumbled before he could reach the hunter. Sure Scent, in a moment had thrust his knife into the fallen one's side. The other recovering from the torpor and surprise, into which he had first been plunged by the sudden destruction of his comrades, advanced to strike the blow of vengeance.

Dropping his rifle, which from the promise of strength and agility displayed by his new opponent, he knew would be useless, Sure Scent stood, knife in hand, ready to receive him. The Indian advanced, and having folded a blanket he had taken from one of the dead, around his arm, he struck a blow at the hunter. This the latter avoided, and on his part returned with equal desire to maim, wound, or do some other

grievous bodily harm to his opponent. For some minutes this fight continued, the Indian, on account of his shield, evidently possessing the advantage. The latter, now catching a blow on his arm, which was defended from hurt by the folds of his blanket, succeeded in entangling his adversary's knife, and his own descended towards Sure Scent's unprotected bosom. The latter, in despair, extended his hand with the intention of clutching at the arm which guided the threatening weapon, when a well-known rifle rung in his ear, and his foe, leaping in the air, fell to the ground.

"Now, I guis that's True Eye," he solilo-quised, plucking his knife from the Indian's blanket, and then aloud, "Thank'ee! where are ye?"

"Here," replied the person addressed; "one of them cuss'd Piquots has given me some of his lead. But just see where I've put mine in that yelping fellow; for mine's a good piece, and I like to do my duty by it. You see it's some comfort, when you're going straight away for the

happy hunting grounds, that you havn't missed your last shot. I wish you'd bring him down here, so that I may take my last scalp, for it would make me feel slicker like to know that I'd done my share to-day."

Sure Scent complied with his dying friend's request, and bore to him the Indian he had slain. True Eye secured his trophy in the most regular method of Indian scalping, and then addressing Sure Scent, enquired:

"Now, I just guis they've all got into a precious mess. Do you think the Injians will get hold of their scalps and finger their top-knots for them?"

"Why ther's a good chance of many of them having red poles by to-morrow, if the wolves don't make them white for them during the night, for you see you're being down, one of our best hands for stopping the red screecher is gone, but I don't think you're done for yet."

"Well, I'm pretty sure I've smelt and heard my last scrimmage. But I say, Sure Scent, don't let the Injians get my scalp."

"No I won't," replied the hunter to the request of his friend, "only don't give up the trail."

"I can't keep on much longer: that Piquot did for me; but thank you, Sure Scent, for saying my scalp shan't be fingered by the thieves," said the wounded man, and a smile of gratitude lit up again his fast fading eye; he then requested the other to leave him for a few minutes, reminding him at the same time of his promise to protect his scalp.

Being now in undisputed possession of the small thicket, Sure Scent was enabled by his conquest materially to aid the advance of his friends.

Having seen to this and possessed himself of eight bloody tokens of contest and victory, he returned to his friend, whose prophecy concerning his own death he found to have been fulfilled. Drawing his knife he separated the head of the deceased from its trunk, and concealed it among some leaves, thus effectually, though rudely performing the last wishes of the departed.

The fight continued, every moment assuming a more threatening aspect for the small party of whites.

True the latter had now advanced considerably, and had even gained the very outskirts of the wood; but here they were compelled to halt, not daring to quit the shelter of their covers, for they were well convinced that should they attempt to emerge from their concealment, they would immediately render themselves the easy prey of the Indians.

Each moment the numbers of their adversaries increased, both by the arrival of the scouts, as also by the warriors who had been engaged in the destruction of the fort and of its inmates, whilst their own considerably diminished.

The English band now became surrounded, and even the chance of holding out until dark seemed doubtful. Their circle which they sought to maintain, gradually became contracted as those upon its skirts were driven in. But what was far more injurious to the cause of the whites than even the balls of their enemies, and threat-

ened to promote their destruction far more than even the superiority of numbers the Piquots possessed, was the spreading of the heart-rending news that their mothers, their babes, their sisters, had all alike been murdered, and that no more the sweet smile upon, nor joyous acclamation from well-loved lips, would welcome them to their homes or hearths.

A report also, that the Major and his daughter were among the slain accompanied this intelligence.

Many at these tidings became almost frantic, and maddened by the severity of their losses seemed as men bereft of reason, and rushed forwards with the intention of encountering their foes hand to hand, and of satiating their rage, and appeasing their grief in the blood of the authors of their bereavements.

They quitted their covers, but scarce had done so, or risen into view, when there came quick and successive discharges, from every tree and bush in possession of their enemies, and the Indians testified their gladness at this diminu-

tion of their foemen's numbers by shouts of joy.

Sure Scent endeavoured to prevent this pernicious and wilful example from being followed, and being strenuously seconded in his endeavours by both Kennedy and Martin, who had hitherto most fortunately escaped, although neither, especially the former, had been particularly careful of their persons, he succeeded in hindering it from spreading farther. To the small remnant, which now lay concealed, death seemed inevitable. To whatever side they looked not even the shadow of assistance appeared. Alone could they look to night for succour, and to the frail resource that darkness would allow of their baffling and escaping their enemies, or else of their fighting through them, and gaining some tenable position. Each successive moment but served to diminish this last hope, and the possibility of being able to protract their resistance, became each moment fainter—for now they began to observe symptoms among their foes of a meditated charge, which they were perfectly unable to sustain, both from

the paucity of their numbers, and from the fatigue that the few had undergone, having been marching or fighting for the last three hours; and Indian warfare allows of no resting—its field is one continual change.

"Stand ready!" cried Sure Scent, "they're coming. Put your bullets into their red skins and then club and knife them."

An universal discharge of Indian rifles prevented, had the hunter desired it, any further speech on his part. One moment of breathless silence then ensued, as the one party, with every hope of success, and the other with almost despair, made their last preparations for the struggle about to be commenced. At this juncture a loud, shrill-piercing whoop arose, and broke the unseemly stillness; and which, prolonged by the echoes of the forest, rung in the ears of the startled Piquots its notes of hatred and defiance; but to the ears of the delighted borderers it spoke of succour and of assistance; and almost immediately after it was heard, this signal of the neighbourhood of friends was followed by the

welcome report of the discharge of several weapons; and the whites testified their gratitude by a heart-felt cheer.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Sure Scent, "there goes Tasharah. I knew the boy wouldn't let the devils do for us this time; and I'll place my next hunting venture 'gainst a sodger's sack, there's some half-dozen red-skin Piquots knocked over their heads for them, and he's made plenty of holes in them to give light to their insides. Here they come!—Stand by!—A steady arm and cool eye.—Put it well into them!"

As he spoke, a few of the Piquots rushed from their covers; but the charge, in place of being simultaneous and combined, was only a sudden movement of some few of the bravest warriors. The others, surprised by the unexpected attack upon them of the most dreaded and intrepid leader of their enemies, had either proceeded to the point the latter menaced, or being undecided how to act, did not join in the rush. They who did, startled by the close and deadly reception with which they were greeted, and which

struck down above half their numbers, first wavered, and then swiftly retreated to the different positions they had just quitted. But there were two who disdained to fly. One pressing onwards gained the bush where Sure Scent lay ensconced, but just as he was about to enter it, a rifle shot brought him low, and he was immediately scalped by that indefatigable admirer of his tribe's hair. The other, for a time more fortunate, secured and grappled with one of his foes, who easily fell a victim to him, having been in part disabled by a shot in his arm. Instead of being satisfied and contented with this success, the warrior looked eagerly and desiringly around for some one whose head bore the decoration of its hair. His gaze was arrested by and fell upon Sure Scent, who was at this very instant employed in taking the locks from his fallen companion's caput, and placing them in the most approved and fashionable manner in his own belt. The eyes of the Piquot darted fire from the rage and indignation that he felt, at perceiving this treatment of his countryman;

and he most religiously determined that his nation should be rescued from the degradation of having a trophy borne from one of her sons. Incited by his patriotism, without further consideration, he bounded forward with his knife and arm upraised ready to execute vengeance on the man who thus had thought to triumph over and insult his country. Two rifles sent their quick messengers after him to request him to stop, in a manner far more rude than civil; but in place of performing their errands properly, they amused themselves with lopping off the twigs, and finally concealing themselves in the heart of some of the surrounding wood. Several voices sought to warn the hunter of his danger ; but he seemed either not to hear or to disregard them. The Piquot was now within a few feet of him, and many of the spectators, under the influence of their feelings, hurried to his assistance, or, as appeared more probable, his avenging; but he avoided laying himself under obligations to any by flinging himself, quickly, and unexpectedly, upon the ground. The Indian, unable to stop himself,

on account of his impetus, performed a somerset over him, and lay prostrate upon the earth. Sure Scent, unwilling to allow him an opportunity of revenging his ignominious tumble, took rather an unchivalrous advantage of his fall by putting his knife between his foeman's ribs.

"Ah! ah!" laughed the old hunter to himself, amused at what appeared to him ridiculous in the attempt of his enemy, "so he thought he'd be catching me asleep, but I jist guis he got trapped himself. He's a fine tall fellow though, a chief, I guis, one perhaps of the council fire." Continuing in this strain his observations, he fell into a series of meditations that caused him to forget entirely his situation as leader of a beleaguered and threatened party, until the current of his thoughts was interrupted by Martin, who ventured to suggest the propriety of an immediate retreat, and before their enemies, recovering from their surprise, should return to the attack.

This Sure Scent received in the testy manner with which such interruptions are generally wel-

comed by individuals caught napping by those whom they regard as their inferiors, and who, whilst they perceive their value or necessity, feel anything but agreeably disposed towards the maker.

"Well, you're in a mortal hurry to turn tail, I jist guis, young man, but when you've seen as many scrimmages as I have, you'll be more up to 'specting what them Injians are sometimes up to; why p'raps this is jist anither of their tricks."

"But you said yourself that you heard Tasharah; if he is near we need feel no more fear of attacks from the Piquots, who will have enough to do to take care of themselves."

"But I can't be certain," replied Sure Scent, with the dogged obstinacy of one determined not to yield to the observations of another, though he should have to do so by continually contradicting what he had before advanced, "how can I tell one screeching red-skin from another! They all holloa alike and there's no diff'rence, I guis, in their shoutings."

Martin perceiving that without gratifying the wounded vanity of the old hunter, which had been offended at the idea of advice being offered him gratuitously, from one so considerably younger than himself, that both he and his companions might be exposed to danger through lingering in their present position, resolved to conciliate him, and for this purpose affecting a tone of astonishment and of admiration at the hunter's prowess, he said, pointing to the bundle of scalps which Sure Scent had never allowed an opportunity to pass, of increasing,

"Really, Sure Scent, you don't mean to say you've taken all those by yourself? Why you ought to be called Scalp Taker instead of Sure Scent, for it would suit you much better; how many do the Piquots count less from what you've got there?"

"As to that, young man," replied Sure Scent, who now became patronizing and kind in proportion as he felt the balm of flattery applied to his wounded pride, "I think these that I've got here are nothing, not worth while coming all this

way even to pick up, here's not more than 'leven. Now in the time of the last war I got upon the trail of some Piquot and Frencher hunters, and kept on it too till I touched some fifty of their scalps; now that's what I call worth while going on a 'specdition."

"Well," said the young man, still with affected wonder, "I had often heard of your doings among your enemies, but to tell you the truth, I never would have believed them, had I not seen you to-day; how capitally you tricked that Piquot; we all thought you were done for until we saw him sprawling and you taking his scalp; but I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll wager you a silver bit you don't make fifteen scalps before the day's out."

"I know that's the way you do in the clearings, but we always puts skin 'ginst skin; I don't care though, about doing as you said, for if I lose, a week's hunting will give me the silver, so here's done to it."

And Sure Scent signified his acceptance of the bet by grasping the hand of the young man in

his own bony fingers, and giving it a shake, which, for the time, deprived it of all sensation, and rendered it numb for a considerable period afterwards, so much so that he would have been unable to avail himself of its assistance if he were required to use it immediately.

Having released his fingers from their short but both painful and disagreeable imprisonment, Martin, addressing his companion in a most submissive tone, asked for his council, as though the hunter were an oracle.

"What do you advise from the way we are in now, as best to be done, for you are so well acquainted with the Indians' tricks and plans that one would almost fancy you knew what they were after as soon as they do themselves? How do you think we can best get out of this unfortunate mess we're fallen into? Are you for joining Tasharah, if that was he we heard just now, or for remaining where we are?"

Sure Scent, whose ruffled plumage had now been smoothed, condescended to inform his questioner what he purposed doing. Martin neither

saw nor made any objection to his propositions, and shortly the old hunter put them into execution.

Collecting around him the remainder of his party (which now only numbered twelve), he made a push for the side that lay nearest to the succour, that had so opportunely arrived. No one appeared to oppose him; for the Piquots, weakened by their losses, uncertain as to the force that composed the new foe who had come to the assistance of their enemies, whilst they had succeeded in firing the fort—the principal object of their attack—and had obtained a sufficient number of scalps to satisfy their honour, were now commencing to retreat. Laborde, as he had accomplished his design, the capture of Maria, now wished to secure his prize from the pursuit of her exasperated friends and relatives, and for this purpose retired from the field, where he had worked so much injury to his foes but not without sustaining some part of the recoil upon himself. Thus, without en-

countering an enemy, the reduced party of whites joined themselves to Tasharah, who had so fortunately and so skilfully extricated them from their embarrassed situation; and what added not a little to the pleasure they experienced in finding themselves once again in security, was the discovery of Vernon secure and unharmed, with the exception of the wound upon his forehead. He, however, breaking short the real and heartfelt congratulations of the young men, enquired of them for his daughter. The silence which ensued, and grief and consternation depicted upon every countenance at his question, told him it was vain to seek for information from that quarter.

"Fool!" he exclaimed, "fool! that I was to wait thus, and to allow Maria to be torn from my arms without having made one single effort for her rescue. Still greater fool I was," he continued, addressing himself to the Indian, "to believe and to listen to you. You have both lied to and deceived me. Did you not tell

me but just now, that these would bring my daughter with them, and see they even know nothing about her."

The mouth of the Indian closed more firmly, a gleam of passion passed over his countenance, as these epithets met his ear, and his hand for one moment grasped convulsively the handle of his knife; but this feeling was but transitory, or at least to the eyes of one deep skilled in reading the mind in the expression of the face. It was as the flash of lightning which illumines for one instant a summer evening's sky; it burns for a moment, betokening the raging of some far distant storm, and then its glare is gone, and all is left in its former darkness and deep gloom. Short as was this evidence of rage, Martin had observed it, and knowing the danger which might arise if hate or anger were allowed to take fire and burn in the breast of the Indian, feeding on the inadvertent words of the Major, not intended to insult but wrung from him by his disappointment and the bitterness of his grief, he determined to attempt to extinguish it before it

could burst into a flame, and said, addressing the other in his own language:—

"Does the great Chief of the Mohawks, whose deeds, told in the cabins of the Piquots, make their bravest warriors tremble, and whose counsel is sought by the white men, for he has the heart of a war eagle and the head of a beaver—does Tasharah, who is like a panther among his enemies, and in whose lodge are drying so many scalps—does he feel angry, and does his face grow cloudy at the words of a grey head? Is he like a Piquot-boy who strikes the Mohawk warrior who is tied to the stake, and is singing in his ears the victories of his nation?"

"The grey head is a chief among his people; he has much fire and many young men," replied the Indian, with quiet gravity. "But," he continued, his passion overcoming the restraint he would put upon it, "he has called Tasharah a liar, and has eaten his own words."

"Why does a wise chief, who cares not for the deeds of his enemies, why does he think of the words of an old man? Has not

the loss of his daughter been to the heart of the father as though he had taken of the fire water of his people?"

This explanation was sufficient, and the Indian, having had his anger removed by the judicious observations of Martin, proposed that an expedition should immediately set out for the purpose of following the enemy, who had made so distressing an inroad, and whose devastations had affected more or less every individual present, which, whilst it should attempt the rescue of Maria, was to repay upon the Piquots, if an opportunity occurred, part of the injury the latter had inflicted. This advice was hailed and immediately acceded to by all; and each was ready at the instant to proceed upon a road which would swarm with even more dangers than the one of the morning. Alone, the two without whom it was impossible to advance with even a prospect of security or success, namely, Sure Scent and Tasharah, held back. On the weather beaten features of the one a smile was playing, whilst the proud curled lip of the

other told of the contempt which filled his soul. The attention of Kennedy was soon drawn to this seeming unwillingness of the two to proceed, although the proposition had come from one; and fearful lest there might be some impediment in the way of an immediate departure, he addressed Tasharah in the Indian tongue.

"Do the legs of the Mohawk lag like those of the wearied deer, or does he fear because his enemies are strong? The path is open, if he will, he can go."

The eyes of the Indian flashed at this insinuation against his courage; but quickly mastering himself, he replied in a sarcastic manner,

"Do the screeching owls go forth to hunt the buffalo of the plains?"

Kennedy, who had not intended any reflection by what he had said, immediately took fire at what he considered an uncalled for insult on the part of the Mohawk; and scarcely allowing the customary interval required by courtesy to elapse, he was on the point of replying with some harshness, when most fortunately for the

prevention of a quarrel, for the wild and reckless youths and proud and savage Indians were, as the spark and powder, too apt to fire at whatever appeared to bear the remotest affinity to insult, contempt, or sarcasm. Sure Scent allayed the rising storm by explaining the meaning of their Indian ally.

"What say you now? You've learnt the Injian speech. What think you Tasharah meant?"

"Why that's more than I exactly know," replied Kennedy; "but I'll tell you what it is," he continued slapping his rifle, "it's more than any Injian shall do, Piquot, or Mohawk, or whatever he is, to call me a screeching owl."

"Tut! man," replied the hunter; "Tasharah didn't mean anything of that sort, he's nice, and delegate in his speech, as a reg'lur, right down melodist. Now, this is what he says, the Piquots are too many for a stand up fight, when half are bored through," referring to the greater part of the young borderers who were binding up their wounds, "and though you've all got plenty

of will to the thing, there's only one," pointing to Martin, " that's up to the Injians at all. Now do you understand, young man, for I've tried to make it easy for you? and now if you've got any thing to say let's hear it at the council. For, you see, I like all the Injian ways, and having a talk 'fore going on trail is one of them, so we'll just have a little spitchyfying."

Sure Scent lost no time in proceeding to put his design into execution; and collecting Tasharah, Kennedy, Martin, and the Major, he at once opened the debate himself by exposing his own views, together with the Mohawk's, for Tasharah perfectly agreed with him. His proposal went to the effect, that the Indians, with one or two of the least fatigued of the whites, should alone undertake the pursuit, and seek, on the first proper opportunity to rescue the prisoner out of the hands of Laborde, and if successful in that attempt to return immediately.

This advice—though Kennedy was convinced it was the most prudent that could be given, and if followed promised the greatest probability of

success—was most resolutely opposed by the young woodsman, who considered that, as only one or two of the whites were to be chosen, that these in all likelihood would be Sure Scent and Martin, to the prejudice and exclusion of himself, and he desired of all things to be engaged in this attempt for the succour of Maria, whose present captivity he regarded himself as being one of the principal causes of—since it had been entirely at his instance that all who might have protected her had been withdrawn. In his haste, arising from his desire to remove any favourable impression the hunter's words had produced, he forgot the decorum and gravity of an Indian council, and no sooner had Sure Scent seated himself, than Frank came forward, eager and anxious to combat the opinions just delivered.

He observed, he knew no reason why the whole party should not proceed. True, some were wounded; but then he did not understand why this should interfere with those who, like himself, had fortunately escaped. Again, he reckoned the Piquots at about forty; and he

both proved and demonstrated, as he himself considered very clearly, that fifteen men would produce more effect upon their enemies than could seven or eight; and he finally concluded by saying, that where a trigger was wanted to be pulled upon either Frenchman or Piquots, that he wasn't going to be the one to be left behind. And, then, having exhausted both his breath and his rhetoric, he sat down, casting a glance around to see what effect he had produced, and especially towards the two whom he most desired to enlist upon his side. The countenance of the Indian was impenetrable; whilst Sure Scent's openly declared that the old hunter had penetrated through his design, and felt rather disgusted at the interested motives which had incited him to speak.

Martin next spoke, but it was only to give his assent to the propositions of Sure Scent, with whom also Vernon coincided.

Alone Kennedy maintained his opposition, but the justice of the remarks of the preceding speakers soon broke upon him, when he compre-

hended he was to be included among the pursuers.

The result of the debate was, that Tasharah, with two of his warriors, Kennedy and the Major, should alone compose the party destined to follow after the Piquots and their French leader. That Sure Scent collecting some of his companion hunters, should be at a certain period in their present place of consultation, for the purpose of aiding in a projected expedition into the enemy's country, to avenge the injuries the latter had inflicted. Martin was also to be ready at the same time with as many borderers and rifles as he could persuade by their appetites for adventure, or excite by description of the outrage, to join in the enterprize. One of the Indians was dispatched for the purpose of encountering a band of Mohawks, for Tasharah having by means of his spies discovered the intended attack of the Piquots, had ordered a number of braves to follow him with the utmost dispatch, whilst himself with only a few warriors for greater expedition had proceeded at once; these were to follow as quickly

as possible upon the footsteps of the pursuers. The other Mohawk was to proceed to the villages of his nation to arouse the warriors to join in the inroad. To the remaining youths and borderers was confided the protection of the fort, the fire of which had been extinguished, and the maintenance of which to their own party was so necessary, as it was the point at which it was proposed the storm should collect itself that was to burst over their neighbours with all the violence that Indian barbarity or white ingenuity could devise; but their cares did not terminate here, for they had to summon to the gathering as many of their friends and relatives as possible, and to collect a store of provisions.

Having placed everything in as promising a condition as circumstances would allow, and provided himself with arms, Vernon nominally took the command of this forlorn hope, whose chances of success appeared so small, and it started on its dangerous path, scarce two of the bosoms which composed it beating with the same sensations; for whilst the Major experienced all the

fear and anxiety of a parent, Kennedy could scarce restrain his joy at thus being a second time concerned in the liberation of Maria, the chances of a repulse never once occurring to his sanguine mind. Tasharah felt as unmoved as though he were going an ordinary journey, and the "braves" regarded their expedition alone with apathy and unconcern, relying on their chief's sagacity and their own courage to meet every obstacle that might arise; being helped to this happy conclusion by a most consummate contempt for their adversaries, and exalted idea of their own abilities and superiority.

END OF VOL. I.

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